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The Nation.

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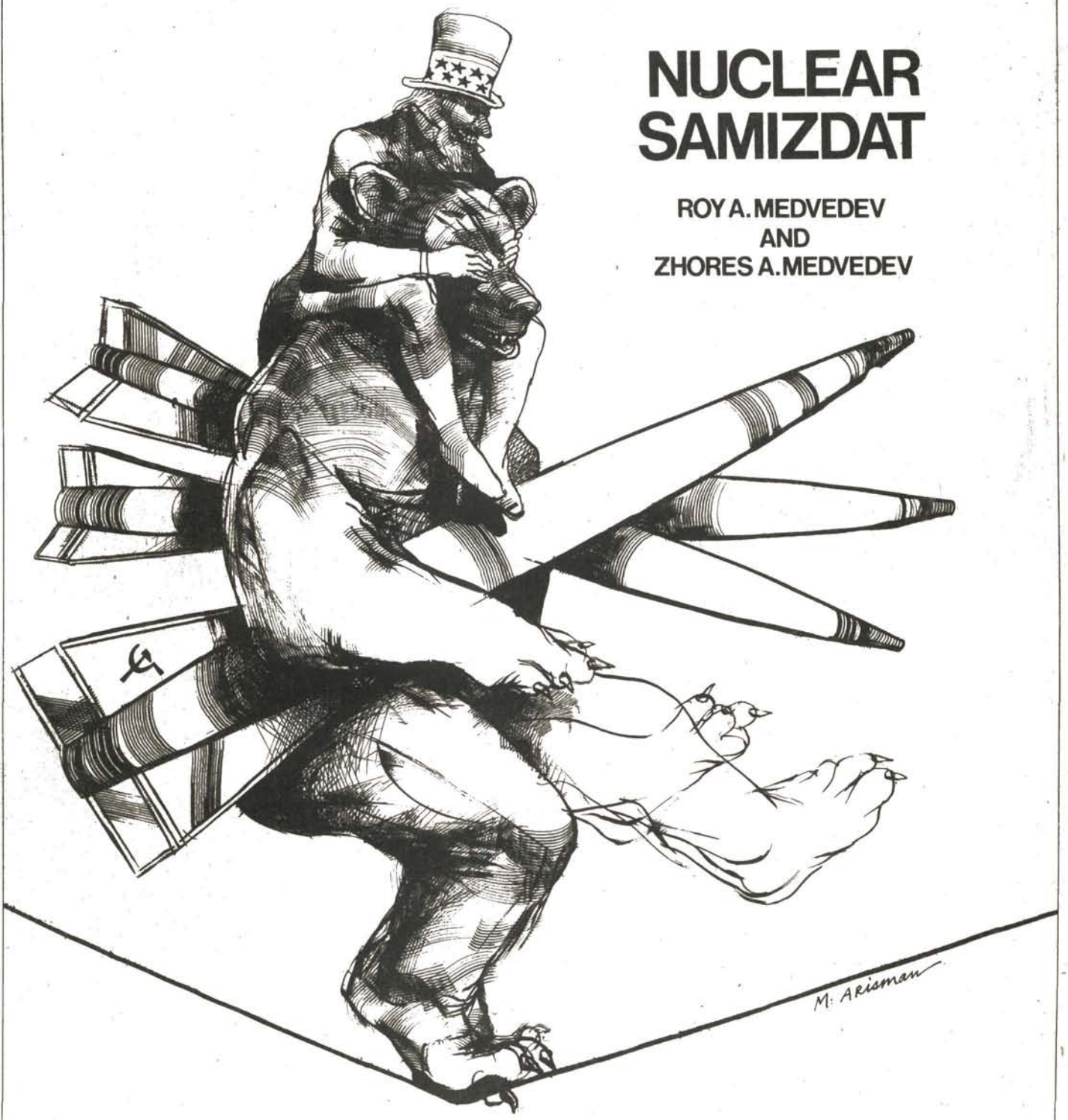
NUCLEAR SAMIZDAT

ROY A. MEDVEDEV
AND
ZHORES A. MEDVEDEV



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LETTERS.

PHOTOGRAPHIC WITNESS

New York City

In "The Esthetic View of Death" [*The Nation*, Nov. 21, 1981], Lesley Hazleton attacks the raison d'être of three Holocaust-related books, including *The Auschwitz Album*, the text for which is mine.

Hazleton is right to raise the issue of the commercialization of the Holocaust. Why indeed should such a book be published? I'd have to say, however, that she runs more than a little amok when she dismisses this particular work as a "coffee table" book and compares its potential buyers to S.S. men exchanging gifts.

The Auschwitz Album has its origin in a search by the French Holocaust scholar Serge Klarsfeld for all known photographs of Jews at Auschwitz. His intention was to publish them in one volume as a refutation of the canard that the Holocaust was a myth. To his surprise, Klarsfeld discovered that all the known photographs apparently issued from one source, a single album found in a German barrack by Lili Meier on the day of her liberation. For most of the intervening thirty-seven years, the album had remained in the bottom dresser drawer in Meier's bedroom in Miami, where she and her husband resettled. Less than half of the 185 photographs therein had been published.

Now all the photographs have been published with careful annotation. The purpose of *The Auschwitz Album* is still as Klarsfeld conceived it—to be a weapon against the liars. *Peter Hellman*

RESERVOIR RECOUNT

Englewood, Colo.

Fred J. Cook stated in "The Coming Catastrophe" [*The Nation*, April 25, 1981] that "there are *8,000* producing natural-gas reservoirs in the huge Tuscaloosa Trend that runs across Louisiana and Texas and into the Gulf of Mexico" (emphasis added). As of July 1981, there were about *twenty-two* separate reservoirs producing in forty-six wells in eleven fields in the Tuscaloosa Trend.

Many of Cook's other statements in the article were of comparable accuracy. I suggest that the Fund for Investigative Journalism spend their money on a reporter who can at least come close to the truth.

John M. Parker, geologist

COOK REPLIES

Interlaken, N.J.

I am amazed both by John Parker's intemperance and by his inaccuracy. His letter makes me wonder, since he is a geologist, about the nature of his special interest. Let's set the record straight. The broad belt of sediments that stretches across Louisiana and runs through Texas into Mexico, both onshore and offshore in the Gulf of Mexico, is usually referred to as the Tuscaloosa Trend. Geologists, making a distinction, designate the inland portion of this huge belt the Tuscaloosa Trend, the coastal and gulf part the Miocene Trend.

What I was writing about was this entire gas-rich area. According to Dr. Paul Jones, an authority on the region, Federal Power Commission figures at the end of the 1970s showed that there were, indeed, 8,000 gas-producing reservoirs there. The number has grown, if anything, within the past two years, which have seen a phenomenal increase in drilling activity.

In 1980, five new natural-gas fields were developed within a twenty-mile radius of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in the Tuscaloosa Trend, an area where gas wells are as thick as quills on a porcupine. Figures of the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources show that, as of November 1, 1981, ninety-three gas wells were operating in this area, not forty-six as Parker would have it. And this is only a small part of the picture.

In an article titled "Louisiana Gulf Coast Onshore," published last year by the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, Kenneth McDowell and John Rives JR. reported that wildcat drilling had resulted in nineteen new field discoveries in 1980, two fewer than in 1979. Fifty successful extensions and new discovery wells were completed in the coastal Miocene Trend, and onshore drilling in south Louisiana brought in 546 successful wells in 1979 and 632 in 1980. Only a small percentage were oil wells. Some wells produce both natural gas and an oil-like condensate, which is normal; but the overwhelming percentage of new wells produced natural gas. Some of them were real blockbusters, with flows of from 10,000 to 14,000 MCF (thousand cubic feet) of natural gas a day, in addition to the condensate.

The contrast with Parker's minuscule figures is remarkable, to say the least. Even so, this account only skims the surface. It does not deal with drilling activities in the gulf itself or in Texas, where drilling has increased greatly in the last two years. I might add that sources in Louisiana and Texas tell me that big producers were "tearing their hair" over my *Nation* article. They hated to see such facts published because they prefer to cultivate the myth of scarce resources in furtherance of their campaign for natural-gas decontrol and higher prices.

Fred J. Cook

'HAARETZ' DECLARATION

Berkeley, Calif.

Enclosed is my translation of an open letter, published recently in the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, that should be of interest to your readers. *Richard Silverstein*

Tel Aviv

We, the undersigned, representing different political viewpoints, have united in the face of a mounting wave of nationalist extremism, religious fanaticism, hatred between ethnic groups and classes and violence both within Israel and toward those outside it.

Entire groups of citizens have been deprived of their rights. Freedom to research and to distribute information of public interest has been endangered. Basic rights of the inhabitants of the occupied territories have been harmed by the theft of their lands.

These actions endanger our future and contradict the principles upon which the state of Israel was founded. The Declaration of Independence of Israel states:

> The nation is founded upon the principles of freedom, justice and peace, in light of the vision of Israel's prophets. It will uphold complete equality of political and social rights among all its citizens, without regard to religion, race or sex. The nation guarantees freedom of religion, conscience, speech, education and culture.

Only by the strength of our commitment to these ideals can we uphold a democratic society and culture. Only if we honor the rights of the individual can we uphold these principles.

Israel is changing for the worse before our eyes. The time has come to act for the realization of the Israel promised by our Declaration of Independence.

Our purpose is to create a broad coalition of citizens prepared to fight against discrimination that harms individuals and groups, and against a government policy which demands territorial annexation at the expense of the rights of certain of Israel's citizens; we will struggle for freedoms of the individual, for peaceful coexistence with the Palestinian people, for tolerance, for mutual respect and for protection of our inheritance of freedom of religion and conscience.

This coalition is not bound to any political party and will cooperate with all groups and people working for the same goals—within Israel and outside it.

We call upon all those who share our feelings to join with us in raising our voices for the sake of an Israel that is tolerant, and that searches for justice and true peace. Our address is: Temporary Action Committee, P.O. Box 22181, Tel Aviv, Israel 61221.

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Natan Zach, poet
Yehuda Amichai, poet
Saul Friedlander, historian
Dan Miron, literary critic
Boas Evron, writer
Yehoshua Sobol, playwright
Dahlia Rabikovitch, poet
Aryeh Simon, educator
Shulamit Koenig, Peace Now
Sami Michael, novelist
Amos Gitai, film maker

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EDITORIALS.

A Message from The Medvedevs

Despite their distinguished careers as scientist and historian, respectively, Zhores and Roy Medvedev are probably the Russian dissidents least known in the West. This is perhaps because their political stance does not derive from conservatism or Russian Orthodox patriotism, as does, say, Alexander Solzhenitsyn's. Rather, they use a neo-Marxist approach in their analysis of Soviet society and of international relations (which did not prevent Zhores from being labeled insane by the secret-police psychiatrists in his home country).

As they point out in their essay written in response to E. P. Thompson's "Letter to America" [*The Nation*, January 24, 1981], the Western world is blessed with sufficient pluralism to allow open discussion of the origins of the cold war. This privilege is denied to Soviet citizens, along with every other avenue of expression. It is perhaps that fact as much as any other which makes the conventional wisdom about the U.S.S.R. so persuasive. A country organized along totalitarian lines is obviously easier to depict as an aggressor. And a country with no public opinion is at first sight more easily tempted by military adventurism.

The truth is, however, that democratic America has set the pace in the manufacture of weapons systems and in their deployment throughout the world. Democratic Europe, too, has been promiscuous in the export of nuclear technology to sensitive areas of the globe. While the Red Army undoubtedly oppresses Eastern Europe, it does not keep any thermonuclear weapons there. In Western Europe, by contrast, nuclear missiles are as common as steeples. Add to this the menacing statements regarding the use of nuclear weapons by men like Alexander Haig, and there is no mystery about Russian fears.

Of course, once an arms race begins, it develops a momentum of its own. The Soviet Union is no innocent party in all this; it has added some innovations to the nuclear arsenal. Its repressive political system fosters an unsentimental attitude toward the use of power. But one need not have any illusions on that score in order to maintain the obvious—that the Soviet Union does not desire war, or the risk

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of it. The "totalitarian" argument, which seeks to compare Russia with prewar Germany (and thus, by implication, antiwar arguments with prewar appeasement) just doesn't sit well with the facts. Nazi Germany not only wanted war, it needed conquest and expansion in order to survive. That is why the thousand-year Reich lasted only twelve years. The Soviet Union can get along quite well within its own grim borders, and by and large has done so. As the Medvedev brothers point out, the tendency in the West to blame Russian meddling for developments in the Third World that are unfavorable to Western interests is simply an alibi for our own crimes and failures.

The Medvedevs have experienced Soviet repression first hand. But they are not prepared to see the world become a radioactive cemetery in the name of anti-Communism, and their objection to the Soviet Union is not (as in the case of Richard Pipes and others) to its very existence. If our own military leadership had a tithe of the Medvedevs' integrity, there would be some ground for optimism. As it is . . .

About the Authors . . .

Roy A. Medvedev, a historian who lives in Moscow, is the author of Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism *(Knopf),* On Stalin and Stalinism *(Oxford University Press) and* On Socialist Democracy *(Knopf), and editor of the* Samizdat Register *(Norton). With his twin brother, Zhores A. Medvedev, a scientist who has lived in London since 1973, he has written* Khrushchev: The Years in Power *(Norton). Zhores A. Medvedev has written* The Rise & Fall of T. D. Lysenko *(Columbia University Press),* Ten Years After Ivan Denisovich *(Random House),* Soviet Science *(Norton) and* Nuclear Disaster in the Urals *(Norton). The original version of their article appears in* New Left Review 130 *(November/December 1981) as part of an ongoing debate on the strategic arms race and the new cold war. It will be reprinted in the forthcoming New Left Review/VERSO book,* The Logic of Exterminism, *together with essays by E. P. Thompson, Raymond Williams, Fred Halliday and others.*

NUCLEAR SAMIZDAT*

* **sa·miz·dat** ('sämēz,dät) n. (Russ, fr. *sam* self + *izdat*el'stvo publisher): Russian argot for the underground publication and circulation of material that is thought to be at odds with official wisdom.

Clark Takes Over

Richard Allen has gone back to being a day laborer. He will get $190 per diem, not bad for a consultant, that misty business which is Allen's real racket. But he lost his battle to remain as national security adviser to Edwin Meese. Now the President will have direct access, so to speak, to a national security adviser without the Meese filter. He will be hearing the awful truth from the lips of William Clark Jr., a man who, at his confirmation hearing as Deputy Secretary of State, seemed to think the world was flat.

The Allen flap would be no more than a blip on the screen of Reagan's apparatus were it not for the fact that the job of national security adviser is the one that most peculiarly bypasses the open processes of constitutional government. Allen himself has been found not guilty of wholesaling his influence in high quarters. At most, his ex-bosses imply, he was a street peddler of that precious commodity. Now he can go back to his influence-peddling full time and at commercial rates. (Given Allen's Toyota connection, Detroit's automakers should hang on to their hats.)

The idea of "national security" is a seductive one. There, right next to the President's ear, sits a wary watchdog ready to bark at the faintest signal of trouble. He Knows All. He Plans Strategy. He Coordinates.

It is a bit hard to see Clark in that role. His intellect failed to win him a degree in either college or law school. Maps and histories are strangers to him. He was Reagan's chief of staff in Sacramento, and there he hired Meese the Prosecutor and Deaver the Arranger, two of the triumvirate now running the White House. Reagan made him a judge, and he jumped from the state bench to the State Department, where he seems to have kept the explosive General Haig under partial control.

Because of Clark's ignorance of foreign affairs it is reasonable to expect a new definition of "national security," one that stresses domestic tranquillity. We already have the Central Intelligence Agency unleashed for homefront intelligence gathering. Further intrusions by the spy apparat into our political life are not hard to imagine.

As redefined, the new job should come easily to the genial coordinator, Judge Clark. After a few months of him busily coordinating and making more effective a collection of bad policies at home and abroad, we may begin to miss the ineffectual fiddler, Richard Allen.

The Shoe Fits

After weeks of deadlock, the United Nations finally elected a new Secretary General on December 11. He is Javier Pérez de Cuellar, a 61-year-old career diplomat from Peru, a dark horse whose name had not appeared in the early balloting. On the surface, the choice of Pérez de Cuellar was a surprise. To grasp how it came about one needs an understanding of the com-

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plex workings of the United Nations and the subtleties of the political power games that are played within this often powerless but always indispensable body.

The Secretary General of the United Nations is elected by the Security Council. The Council's choice is subject to the approval of a majority of the General Assembly. The five permanent members of the Council—the United States, the U.S.S.R., Britain, France and China—may veto any candidate. Hence, an aspirant for Secretary General could be the choice of fourteen Council members and still lose if a permanent member exercises its veto.

Another peculiarity in the system is that a Council member may vote for more than one candidate. One can sympathize with the need for this escape hatch, which allows a sovereign nation to avoid both the agonies and the consequences of choice. But the rule can complicate the electoral process, and it did so this time.

When the balloting started, there were only two candidates, Secretary General Kurt Waldheim and Salim A. Salim, former Tanzanian representative to the United Nations and currently his country's Foreign Minister. Waldheim is a cunning political infighter. After ten years as Secretary General, he had grown accustomed to the place and sought an unprecedented third term. Imbued with the sophisticated historical perspective of a European diplomat, Waldheim viewed the world in terms of a confrontation between East and West. He understood every fishing line and hot line of the détente process. When a senior Soviet spokesman was asked about Waldheim's candidacy, he compared it to the comfort of old shoes. One could almost hear the White House crying "Amen!"

Salim Salim, by contrast, is a protégé of President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, a major advocate of Third World economic interests and a proponent of the North-South dialogue. A respected figure among U.N. diplomats, Salim is possessed of considerable ability, charm and diplomatic skill. Waldheim is 63 years old, while Salim is 38. The age gap between the contestants symbolized a conflict between two world views, one old and the other new.

As the campaign unfolded, it became clear that the real issue was whether the United Nations would continue to accord first priority to tensions arising out of the East-West confrontation and stick with Waldheim, or whether it would instead choose a candidate who embodied the concerns of the Third World—the problems of poverty and the imperatives of global development. The Reagan Administration was determined to reverse the historical process of the last ten years, during which an increasingly vocal Third World challenged the cozy imperialist arrangements of the Western industrial powers and diverted attention from their primary concern, which is avoiding a war with the Soviet Union.

The issues were equally clear to the Soviet Union. It seeks to remain aloof from the North-South dialogue on the ground that it is not an imperialist power. If Salim were Secretary General, the Russians feared, he would increase the pressure on them to participate. The Soviet Union preferred that East-West issues continue to receive the expert and priority attention of Waldheim.

And so the Reagan Administration felt under no obligation to placate the Third World, while the U.S.S.R., though eager not to offend it, was less than enthusiastic about the prospect of a Salim victory. To the United States, Waldheim was a valuable property; to the U.S.S.R., he was a comfortable old shoe.

That Salim was the unanimous choice of the Organization of African Unity added to U.S. apprehension. And Tanzania's traditional warm relations with China guaranteed Salim a solid friend in that corner. He could also count on the support of Britain, since even Margaret Thatcher would hesitate to veto a member of the Commonwealth; and he could assume that the Socialist government of French President François Mitterrand, which has been courting the Third World, would take a favorable view of his candidacy.

The voting ran true to form. On the first ballot Salim received more than enough votes to win but was vetoed by the United States; China cast its veto against Waldheim. A total of eighteen votes were tallied as three nations voted for both men in order to keep their options open and their friendships intact. The delegates tried again—and again, and again; sixteen ballots in all were taken, but the deadlock continued. As the days turned into weeks, Salim's support eroded to just under a majority. The number of votes for Waldheim rose accordingly, but China continued to exercise its veto.

China's role became a crucial one. According to rumors, China's opposition to Waldheim was merely a gesture. But its motives were more complex. Ostensibly friendly to the United States and implacably opposed to the U.S.S.R., China has an abiding fear of both superpowers. Hostility to the Soviet Union has driven Peking to seek some strange bedfellows. Its dealings with Augusto Pinochet's Chile and its flirtations with antigovernment forces in Angola had tarnished China's image in the Third World. The U.N. vote presented an opportunity to recoup some of this lost good will.

Finally, it became clear that neither the United States nor China would budge, and so Waldheim and Salim withdrew. An exhausted Security Council quickly settled for Pérez de Cuellar. The vote was 10 to 1, with 4 abstentions. More than exhaustion explained the compromise, however. Pérez de Cuellar is a veteran diplomat with thirty-seven years' experience. He had been Peru's representative to the United Nations and to the Soviet Union. He had been Under Secretary General for Special Political Affairs from February 1979 to May of last year. Most important, he had been appointed the U.N.'s special representative to handle negotiations with the Soviet Union on withdrawal from Afghanistan. Here was no Third World zealot to rock the U.S. boat, and the Soviet Union had found him evenhanded. The Third World nations could point to the fact that Peru is one of them. Thus the new shoe was more or less comfortable for everyone. Perhaps the final result was not so surprising after all.

MICHAEL MANLEY

Michael Manley, the former Prime Minister of Jamaica, is the leader of the opposition People's National Party.

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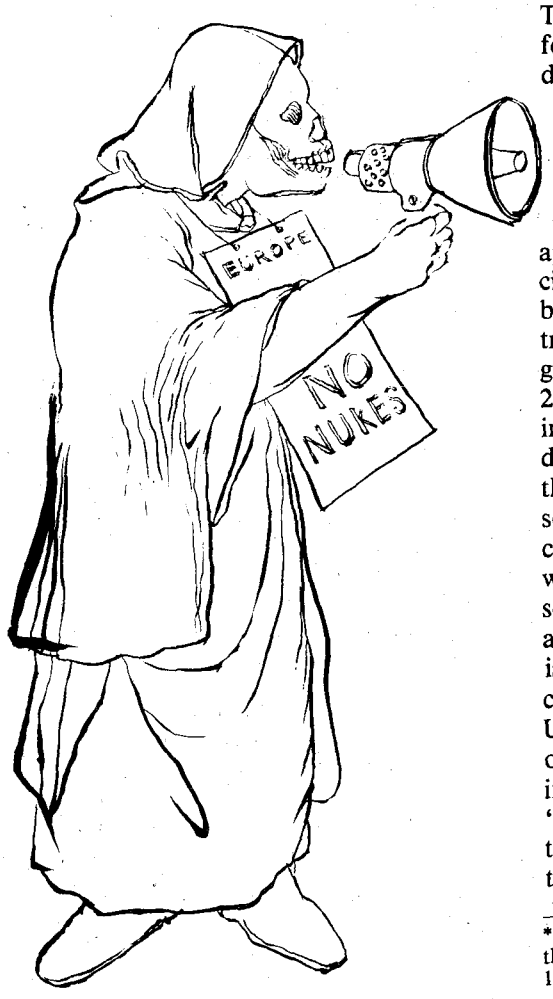
ARTICLE.

LETTER TO THE WEST

A Nuclear *Samizdat* on America's Arms Race

ROY A. MEDVEDEV AND
ZHORES A. MEDVEDEV

In the face of what E. P. Thompson has called the "present war crisis," we welcome the invitation from our comrades in the peace movements and antinuclear campaigns of the United States and Western Europe to join in a cooperative project of dialogue and action. We want to reassure them that despite the barriers thrown up by the official media—West and East—there are Soviet citizens who hear their voices and share their deep concern about the peace of Europe and the world. Precisely because of the urgency of the situation, however, we must all be patient in trying to understand the sometimes different premises and experiences that lie behind our respective perceptions of the present crisis. In particular we would like to respond—critically yet with positive solidarity—to the very powerful arguments on behalf of a movement for European Nuclear Disarmament that E. P. Thompson has advanced in the pages of *The Nation* [see "Letter to America," January 24, 1981] and *New Left Review.** It is important for the peace forces in the West to understand why much of the argument that Thompson made so eloquently would not be received with agreement or unanimity by the peace forces within the Soviet Union. The general public in the Soviet Union may well agree with Thompson's analysis of current figures for nuclear arsenals, especially well documented in his *Nation* article. But figures as such are not of crucial importance for the Russian perception of the new arms race.



By "peace forces" we do not mean the official Soviet bureaucracy or party apparatus, but the ordinary Soviet citizen, whose fierce aversion to war has been conditioned by the historical tragedy—still vivid and haunting to all generations—of 20 million dead and 20 million more wounded and disabled in the fight against the German invasion during World War II. In particular, we think that the rank and file of Soviet society, including many of those who contest bureaucratic authority within it, would be unlikely to accept Thompson's argument—so central to his analysis of the dynamic of "extremism"—that responsibility for the current crisis can be divided equally between the United States and the U.S.S.R. Moreover, as partisans of socialist democracy in the Soviet Union ourselves (and thus, "Soviet dissidents"), we are also unable to agree with what seems to us to be the too fatalistic assessment made by Thompson. In representing a symmetr between the aggressive impulses of th American war machine and the equall "dangerous inertial push" of the Sovie military-industrial complex, we thin that Thompson overlooked importan contrasts between the nature of Amer ican and Soviet society. For instance Thompson wrote in *The Nation* tha "militarism, in its rivalry and even mor in its reciprocity, is bringing out th worst features in both superpowers." I the interests of a realistic understandin of the current crisis and the tasks facin the peace movement, we cannot accep the notion of a functional equivalence between the "deep structures of the cold war" within both blocs, as Thompson rather gloomily characterized Soviet and American societies in his *New Left Review* article.

Such ideas obscure, in our opinion, major differences in the bipolar confrontation—whether we consider the institutional role of military spending, official attitudes toward the use of nuclear weapons, the history of previous attempts at arms limitation, popular perceptions of nuclear policy, the problem of proliferation or the ultimate logics of strategic rivalry. In the notes that follow, we try to indicate some of the asymmetries that we feel are most relevent to understanding the origin of the present arms race. It is of course true that Western societies are more open to analysis than the U.S.S.R., where state decisions are shrouded in much greater secrecy and information about military strategy and technology is especially rigorously kept from the citizenry. Readers should bear this limitation in mind as we try to set Soviet actions and responses since 1945 in context; in some cases our interpretations of moves by the U.S.S.R. are of necessity speculative. Nevertheless, despite the more open character of American society, we will argue that the role of successive U.S. administrations has been, and continues to be, more provocative and less predictable than the Soviet Union's in the global interrelationship between East and West.

A Soviet Military-Industrial Complex?

Military-industrial complexes exist in all modern industrial societies, but they are under much less responsible control in the United States than in the U.S.S.R.

* Edward Thompson, "Notes on Exterminism, the Last Stage of Civilization," *New Left Review* 121, May-June 1980.

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Undoubtedly, military-industrial-research interests in the Soviet Union exercise important influence on the selection of particular weapons programs and the manner of their production, but it would be wrong to suggest that they have ever acquired any control over the long-term strategic policies of the Soviet government—whether under Joseph Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev or Leonid Brezhnev. They do not constitute a "state within a state" as they do in the United States, but remain a subordinate part of the state. Thus we believe Thompson is mistaken to think a situation could ever reach the point in the Soviet Union when "hair-trigger military technology annihilated the very moment of 'politics.' "* The Soviet system is too conservative and densely bureaucratized for this to happen. If the government and party apparatus do not allow any freedom of action even for editors of small and obscure provincial publications, if they refuse to allow any film or play to be presented without a special session at the Ministry of Culture, if they ban the formation of any professional association without state and party authorization, and if not a single person can go abroad without the approval of several party "travel commissions" (not to speak of local and regional police authorities)—then how can one imagine that those military experts who manage the Soviet Union's ICBMs could possibly launch them in an emergency without collective decisions at the highest levels of the party and state? Although we do not know the exact command structure within the Soviet nuclear forces, it is a safe assumption that strict and comprehensive safeguards exist against any possibility of either a mistaken or deliberate initiative by any level of the military heirarchy alone.

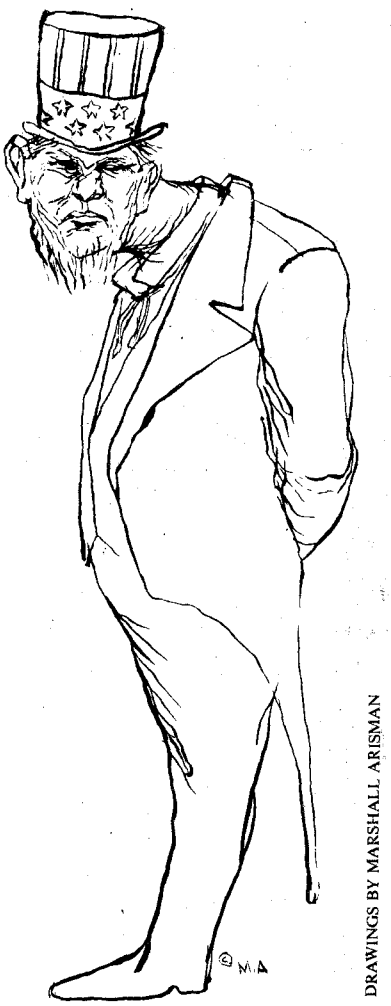
There are further reasons why the intersection of military and industrial interests in the U.S.S.R. constitutes a much weaker and less autonomous complex than in the United States. Neither munitions workers nor factory directors fear loss of employment in the event of reconversion to civilian production; in fact, most defense workers would probably welcome it, since they would no longer be exposed to some of the dangers inherent in arms manufacture. The scientists and researchers in the defense establishment would likewise welcome transfer to civilian projects, since at present their work is so highly classified that they receive no public honor or acknowledgment for their achievements—a source of intense frustration to them. A case in point is Sergei Korolev, architect of Soviet rocket technology, whose prizes were classified and who remained quite unknown in Russia until after his death in 1966. For its part, the Soviet officer corps is a secondary component of the political establishment; generally speaking it is not in a strong position to control the flow of procurements. Moreover, unlike the United States, where competition between the Army, the Navy and the Air Force has traditionally propelled a tendency toward the overproduction of arms systems, interservice rivalry is insignificant within the more unified and subordinated Russian military establishment. Finally, Politburo members are typically more generalist in their careers than most U.S. politicians or government bureaucrats; they are less tied to special-interest groups on whom they depend for the advancement of their careers.

* Ibid., p. 10.

Cold War Perceptions

Let us now turn to the question of the perceptions the parties in the cold war have of each other. There are at least three possible scenarios in which a full-scale nuclear exchange might occur: as an act of deliberate aggression, as a pre-emptive strike in anticipation of aggression by the other side and as a retaliatory strike. If we confine the arena of possible nuclear war to Europe, then the likelihood of a sudden blitzkrieg by either the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or the Warsaw Pact seems zero. In our opinion there are no longer any border disputes, "Danzig Corridors" or revanchist tendencies capable of producing the kind of crises that paved the way to the two world wars. Even if one tried to adopt the mentality of the American cold-war right and imagined (as has Frederick Forsyth in his bestseller, *The Devil's Alternative*) that the Soviet Union was ultimately forced to invade Western Europe for economic reasons, it would, of course, be absurd to think that the U.S.S.R. would destroy it first with nuclear weapons, contaminating it with radioactive debris for centuries. Equally, Western aggression against the U.S.S.R. or the Eastern bloc that might provoke a Soviet nuclear retaliation seems highly improbable. This leaves the possibility of a pre-emptive first strike as the remaining scenario. Now, a pre-emptive strike is conceivable only if one side sincerely believes *or* has clear knowledge that the other side is preparing deliberate aggression.

The problem—and potential fatal danger—is that there is a huge difference between "sincere belief" and "clear knowledge." Sincere belief is an entirely subjective notion implying a range of levels of interpretation and imputed probability. In our opinion, the evolution of the strategic arms race since Hiroshima has been in part based on this problem of the subjective perceptions of the intentions and world view of the other side. For example, if we consider the public explanations advanced by the Western leaderships for



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the "modernization" (in fact, a qualitatively new buildup) of NATO's nuclear arsenal, they purport to be based on the sincere belief that the Soviet Union really does have aggressive intentions toward Western Europe. Even where the Western media take a liberal view of Soviet attitudes, they almost always assume that these can be regarded as essentially similar to those on the American side. Thus in CBS's recent major documentary about the dangers of nuclear war (*The Defense of the United States*), which greatly irritated Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and the Pentagon, Walter Cronkite went to Moscow, according to *The New York Times* of June 14, 1981, "to see what general impressions the 'enemy' may have of us. Not surprisingly, they tend to think of America as the aggressor and are quick to refer to a long list of alleged grievances. . . . Mr. Cronkite reaches the conclusion: 'Who are these Russians? No one can say with certainty. But if their perception of America is as flawed as we believe it is, then our perceptions of the Soviet Union just could be flawed, too. In the absence of any real dialogue, the same old fears and doubts continue to dominate our relationship.' "

This is particularly true in regard to Soviet perceptions about the intentions of the Western European powers. If a television commentator from Norway, Sweden, Greece, France, Italy, the Netherlands or Spain arrived in Moscow, what evidence would he find among the Soviet public of the fear of aggression from *Europe*? Almost none. There would be no "long list of alleged grievances" against any of these countries. It could be argued that West Germany is a special case, and, indeed, until 1958-62 there was still anxiety among ordinary people and sections of Soviet officialdom over possible revanchist tendencies on the German right. The memories of Nazi aggression were still too fresh to allay all suspicions about Bonn's ultimate intentions, whatever common sense might suggest. But the perception of a German threat has slowly receded with time, especially since the emergence of Ostpolitik; and although not completely extinct, these fears no longer play an important role in forming the general Soviet view of Western Europe. Everyone in Russia would feel it as a personal tragedy if any war or accident led to the destruction of Paris, London, Rome, Amsterdam or Madrid. (Do people in Britain or Italy feel the same about Moscow or Leningrad?) If Warsaw Pact missiles and tank divisions face westward today it is not because anyone in the Soviet Union actually thinks that Western Europe by itself is a threat to the security of the U.S.S.R. Rather it is because Europe has for a generation been the primary operational military theater for the United States. The difference is all important.

If a fundamental antagonism between the U.S.S.R. and Western Europe does not exist either in terms of the Soviet Union's foreign policy objectives or its citizenry's perception of the world, it still remains to be explained why there is a pervasive fear of the United States in the U.S.S.R. We will try, therefore, to explain the general strategic situation that has made *defense* the permanent obsession of the Soviet leadership. East-West tensions have passed through successive cycles of confrontation and détente, crisis and relaxation. There were two hopeful periods—both initiated on the Soviet side—when it appeared that a basis might be laid for cooperation in mutually reducing the arms race. The first was Khrushchev's policy of peaceful coexistence (1955-63), and the second was Brezhnev's strategy of détente (1971-79). The most important agreements achieved during these interludes of comparative sanity were the ban on atmospheric nuclear testing and, later, SALT I. SALT II—frequently depicted in the Western press as the victim of events in Afghanistan—had in fact been fatally undermined by the resistance of right-wing forces in the U.S. Senate and the Carter Administration months before the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

Here we must emphasize a crucial difference between Western European and American attitudes toward the Soviet Union, and thus in perceptions of the current crisis in superpower relations. For the countries of Western Europe, the Soviet Union is a state with which Europe has lived for centuries. Russia—prerevolutionary or postrevolutionary—is widely perceived in terms of the evolution of the traditional European state system. The political order in the U.S.S.R. is seen as the long-term outcome of historical trends in European development, for which Russia itself did not always have the main responsibility. Thus Western Europeans are aware that World War I rendered the collapse of Imperial Russia inevitable, while World War II made the U.S.S.R. a military superpower, whose tendency to take every possible measure to guarantee its survival and avoid any repetition of the catastrophe of June 22, 1941, they can understand. In 1944-45 there was a unanimous feeling in Russia that its strategic frontiers must be pushed a long way back. Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria and the eastern half of Germany were occupied as ex-enemy states, and Western opinion initially accepted this. The creation of the Peoples' Democracies in this zone was, on the other hand, widely seen as the formation of a satellite region, lacking popular support—even if Soviet strategic interests in Eastern Europe were acknowledged. There is here a certain distinction between Western European attitudes toward Eastern Europe and toward the Soviet Union itself, though never an absolute one. At the same time, however, the Communist character of the U.S.S.R. does not as such unduly frighten Western Europeans because Marxist ideology and Communist parties have long played important parts in their public life.

American attitudes toward the Soviet Union have historically been very different. It is important to recall the relative isolation of the United States from the politics of Europe in the nineteenth century, and the (related) fact

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that Russia only emerged as an important consideration in American foreign policy in the immediate aftermath of October 1917. Whereas Western Europeans tend to accept the U.S.S.R. as a legitimate state, the last survivor of the great European empires after the collapse of the British and French imperial systems, Americans still often see Russia as the fount of world revolution and left-wing subversion. European political leaders have always had to deal with important local socialist movements—many of them much older than Soviet Communism. By contrast, the United States has lacked any experience of an influential national party of the left. Thus the absence of American socialism and the long isolation of American politics from the affairs of the European state system have contributed to the underdevelopment of a rational understanding of international politics in the United States. This one-sided American perception of the Soviet Union, together with the strength of the left in France and Italy at the end of World War II, in large measure determined the initial American response, which gave rise to what was later labeled the "cold war"—a response subsequently confirmed by the consolidation of Soviet control of Eastern Europe.

The Strategic Balance of Power

To what extent was the cold war also a response to a real military threat to American capitalism from the Red Army? Indisputably, the Soviet forces that greeted the American and British troops on the Elbe and the Danube constituted the strongest land army in world history. Despite the Soviet Union's immense wartime losses, it possessed in 1945 an army of 300 divisions, well equipped with modern weapons and highly mobile tank corps. Soviet analysts—corroborated by not a few eminent Western historians—have generally viewed the American decision to destroy Hiroshima and Nagasaki with atomic bombs in August 1945, at a moment when the surrender of Japan was already imminent, as a demonstration of force primarily designed to intimidate the U.S.S.R. Most discussions of the formidable military power of the Soviet state at the end of World War II neglect, moreover, an extremely salient fact: despite extensive modernization of its armed forces in the course of the war, the one kind of conventional weapon that never received priority was the long-range bomber. The Soviet air force was certainly well equipped with many types of new fighters and special short-range bombers to support ground combat, but it lacked strategic bombers and, indeed, never attempted to carry out massive raids on German cities and industrial centers. The capability to conduct long-range strategic bombing was a wartime monopoly of the United States and Britain. When this advantage was combined with the exclusive possession of atomic weapons (and the proven will to use them), the military superiority the Truman Administration enjoyed over the U.S.S.R. from 1945-49—the beginning of the cold war—should be obvious. U.S. superiority was further enhanced when the U.S.S.R., faced with the enormous task of reconstruction, demobilized the bulk of the Red Army and significantly reduced its military presence in Europe during the same period.

It was during this phase of American nuclear monopoly that Soviet perceptions of the aggressive intentions of the United States began to take shape. Despite the military reductions undertaken—no doubt reluctantly—by Stalin, the United States made no effort to construct a durable peace. Despite the absence of a single other nuclear power in the world, the United States accelerated the development of its atomic arsenal and the fleet of special bombers that allowed it to strike anywhere in the U.S.S.R. Nobody tried to conceal the American threat: Pentagon generals spoke freely of their country's nuclear supremacy and the coming of what *Life* called the "American Century." Meanwhile, the war had devastated the countries of Western Europe and the Mediterranean basin, which desperately needed American economic aid, and they opened their doors to the creation of U.S. air bases encircling the Soviet Union. Eventually this ring of bases extended from Iceland, Britain, France, Italy, Greece and Turkey to Japan and Alaska. Before the U.S.S.R. was able to produce even one primitive thermonuclear device, the United States possessed hundreds. And—what is so often forgotten—even after the Soviet bomb was developed, the Americans continued to retain their monopoly of delivery systems. There was, in fact, no Soviet nuclear threat to the United States in the early 1950s, since the U.S.S.R. did not have a single bomber that could cross the ocean. The strategic dominance of the United States was complete, and during this time (and on-

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ly during this time), there was a crash program of building special atomic shelters near the government buildings and big apartment blocks of Moscow and other cities—a clear index of Soviet apprehension. Even after the testing of the first Soviet intercontinental missiles in 1957 (Korolev's "semerka"), the fundamental strategic equation remained basically unchanged. Despite the impression given by the launching of the first Sputnik, the early Soviet ICBMs were highly unreliable, a handful in number and no serious match for the American B-52s.

The Legacy of the U-2 Affair

It was in the context of this continuing strategic imbalance (in America's favor) that Khrushchev launched his policy of peaceful coexistence and the search for atomic test bans. The failure of this policy is often attributed to the Cuban missile crisis, but in fact Khrushchev's creditable disarmament initiative was undermined much earlier by America's reluctance to stop the periodic surveillance of Soviet territory by American spy planes. Many people in the West, and even more in the U.S.S.R., remember the dramatic shooting down of the U-2 piloted by Francis Gary Powers in 1960, as well as Khrushchev's subsequent and skillful exposure of Dwight Eisenhower as a liar. But neither Khrushchev nor the U.S. sources ever described the U-2 affair as it really was. For the Soviet leadership it would have been an embarrassment to acknowledge that it had been completely helpless for years to prevent overflights at 70,000 feet of its largest industrial centers by American planes; while the U.S. government obviously wanted to minimize the political damage done by the revelation of its previous falsehoods and their disgraceful ending. In fact, the American decision to overfly Soviet territory had been made during Stalin's lifetime, and not just for purposes of military espionage, but for political intimidation. The Soviet government did not publicly denounce these flights at the time but made confidential protests which were dismissed by Washington. As Khrushchev later remarked in his autobiography: "The Americans knew perfectly well that they were in the wrong. They knew they were causing us terrible headaches whenever one of these planes took off on a mission. . . . We were sick and tired . . . of being subjected to these indignities. They were making these flights to show up our impotence. Well, we weren't impotent any longer."*

Moreover, for special effect the dates of these overflights were often selected to coincide with Soviet national celebrations and parades. The U-2 that was finally shot down with the first proper Soviet antiaircraft missiles was engaged in an overflight of the May Day parade in Red Square. It took off from Peshawar in Pakistan, crossed Afghanistan and flew over the Urals, en route for Leningrad and a landing again at a U.S. base in Norway. It was brought down near the industrial center of Sverdlovsk.

Khrushchev seems to have expected some sort of apology from Eisenhower for the Powers flight. He had himself just visited the United States, and had gone to great lengths to demonstrate his commitment to peaceful coexistence—including the sacrifice of previously close Soviet ties to China.** The Soviet leadership expected some response in return to preserve the momentum toward the Paris summit. When Eisenhower instead foolishly justified the spy missions, the Paris talks collapsed. The significance of the U.S. overflights to the Soviet Union was symbolic. They represented a contemptuous expression of the United States' technological superiority over the U.S.S.R., which had existed since 1945. The American refusal to disown these violations of international law during the 1960 "thaw" signified Washington's rejection of any equality in the negotiation process, a posture that rendered disarmament talks in a new situation futile. Khrushchev wrote later in his memoirs: "As far as we were concerned, this sort of espionage was war—war waged by other means. . . . Americans . . . were using military means. And they couldn't hide behind their technology forever."***

The U-2 episode happened almost a generation ago, but the essential American approach to disarmament remains the same. Successive U.S. administrations have made the preservation of a clear military-technological lead over the U.S.S.R. the precondition to any serious negotiation. Looking at this from another angle, *every* significant new technology of nuclear warfare—nuclear-missile submarines, multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs), cruise missiles, the neutron bomb and so on—has been introduced into the arms race by the United States. Rather than viewing the negotiation process as one of preventing the development of further systems of annihilation, the United States has traditionally seen new strategic weapons as bargaining counters to force the Soviet Union to ratify the permanence of the postwar imbalance of military

* *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), p. 444.

** In September 1959 the bombardment of Quemoy and Matsu began, and Eisenhower promised full support to the Kuomintang to repulse a Chinese attack, including the use of nuclear weapons. Khrushchev, despite the urging of the Chinese leadership, nevertheless refused to cancel his trip to the United States, and when he later visited Peking for the tenth anniversary of the Chinese Revolution, he was given an unfriendly reception and cut his visit short.

*** *Khrushchev Remembers*, pp. 446-47. After the Powers flight, the United States ceased U-2 flights over the Soviet Union because it was clear that Soviet missiles could now destroy them. But it did not repudiate the practice of overt surveillance, and in fact continued U-2 flights over Cuba, Korea, Vietnam and China. To this day, the United States remains the only country in the world that—despite its possession of space satellites—still maintains a program of such flights over the territory of other countries.

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nd political power. In fact, until 965-66, the Soviet Union did not have ny real ability to reach American ter-itory, while the United States could each any part of the Soviet Union. In his respect it is incorrect to speak of a 'new'' nuclear danger facing Europe; he logic of the arms race from 1949 on-vard has always meant that Western Europe would be the only real hostage of an atomic war. The United States vas comparatively safe, and this is why he Kennedy brothers could so con-idently threaten military actions during he dark days of the Cuban missile crisis.

Following the failure of the Paris summit, the U.S.S.R. made several unsuccessful attempts to revive the disarmament process. If these initiatives had succeeded, the world could have been spared the great arms race of the next decades, and the superpowers might have achieved some reasonable stabilization of their mutual defense systems. But as Khrushchev had been forced to learn twice through the bitter experiences of the U-2 and Cuban crises, the only chance of getting serious negotiations under way was to show the United States that "they couldn't hide behind their technology forever." Thus the new Soviet leadership, in the aftermath of the Cuban ultimatum and the breakdown of diplomatic overtures, decided to pursue the massive national effort required to attain a credible deterrent capability. It was only in the late 1960s and early 1970s, while the United States was mired in Vietnam, that the U.S.S.R finally acquired the means for large-scale nuclear retaliation against the continental United States. This change in the military-technological balance of power, combined with the effects of the U.S. defeat in Indochina and the Watergate scandal, induced a major alteration in the American attitude toward disarmament talks. Suddenly it became possible to have dialogue with godless Communists and even to sign and ratify SALT I.

Finally, it is important to appreciate how the legacy of the U-2 epoch is likely to have a very different weight for the Soviet and American leaderships. In the twenty years since Powers was shot down, the U.S. administration has changed completely several times. In all probability, neither Gerald Ford nor Jimmy Carter—still less Ronald Reagan today—have any recollection of the history of the U-2s and the decade of deliberate American intimidation of the Soviet defense system. The current Soviet leadership, on the other hand, remembers these events only too clearly. In 1960, Andrei Gromyko was Minister of Foreign Affairs, as he is today; Brezhnev was chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet; Dmitri Ustinov, now Minister of Defense, was at that time Deputy Prime Minister; Yuri Andropov, current head of the K.G.B., was secretary of the Central Committee section responsible for foreign relations; Mikhail Suslov, now the chief ideologist, was another secretary of the Central Committee; Alexei Yepishev, head of the political department of the Red Army, held the same post twenty years ago. While these men's perceptions of American policy may well not be entirely correct, they are incontestably grounded in a much longer and more solid personal experience than the perception of Soviet policy by the current Administration in Washington.

The Shift in Strategic Axes

The origins of confrontation between East and West date back to the emergence of Russia as a great power in the eighteenth century. Many of the decisive conflicts of modern history were, in fact, to be fought on Russian soil: Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812, the Crimean War of 1853-56, the Eastern front of World War I in 1914-17, the Entente intervention in the civil war of 1918-21 and the Nazi aggression of 1941-45. At the end of World War II, the principal American strategic aim became the defense of Western Europe on the basis of an overwhelming U.S. nuclear and air superiority. For twenty years, bases in Europe, Turkey and Japan gave the United States the capacity to strike with relative impunity against the Soviet heartland, while the U.S.S.R. possessed only the limited ability to retaliate against Western Europe and Japan. The North American continent remained secure as long as the Soviet Union lacked strategic aviation, fleets of nuclear submarines or reliable intercontinental missiles; the Atlantic and Pacific oceans still remained the best protection of the United States. This confidence in nuclear superiority and de facto immunity to nuclear retaliation allowed American administrations until the late 1960s to pursue fairly active confrontationist policies. At the same time, however, relations between the U.S.S.R. and Western Europe devel-

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oped more favorably—in part because both sides had everything to lose in a general war. East-West confrontation shifted from its historic Western Europe-versus-Russia axis to the United States versus the U.S.S.R. With the great European empires in decline, the absolute and relative importance of Western Europe in world politics was gradually decreasing, while the countries of the Third World that had once been European colonies assumed more and more significant roles in the global balance of power.

By the advent of the 1973-74 oil crisis, the American leadership had begun to sense a major shift in the geo-economic and military balances of power. The Soviet Union's success in modernizing its navy and developing an ICBM system made the traditional deterrence of oceanic distance a dwindling factor in American defense. Moreover, with the increase in Western dependence upon oil imports, the former geographical advantage of the United States—its distance from the Eurasian land mass—was slowly being transformed into a practical disadvantage, as the Soviet Union's greater proximity to the Middle East and, more important, its independence of Third World resources strengthened the U.S.S.R.'s strategic position. Finally, as potential conflicts developed in Third World arenas where relative superiority in nuclear weapons was no longer a decisive factor, the Soviet Union's assets in conventional warfare tended to acquire a new weight. The overall effect of this narrowing of the strategic imbalance between the superpowers was to pave the way for a revival of the "peaceful coexistence" approach, now relabeled "détente." With the beginning of the SALT negotiations it seemed at last that an era of relative sanity had arrived, with the promise of gradually phased stabilization, and even perhaps reduction, of the massively redundant "overkill" capacities of the Soviet and American nuclear arsenals.

Why, then, did détente suddenly collapse in the last year of the Carter Administration? The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was not the main determinant—if anything, it was more a result than a cause of the demise of détente. SALT II was dead long before, in fact within a few weeks of its signing by Brezhnev and Carter, when it became clear that the U.S. Senate would refuse to ratify it. This refusal was the starting point for the degradation of the international situation, which was then sharply intensified by NATO's decision to re-equip its forces in December 1979—again before Russian troops entered Afghanistan. What were the real reasons for this change in U.S. policy? We think the principal cause of the return to confrontation was the fact that SALT II did nothing to redress the disadvantages of the United States in the Third World, where America had suffered yet another setback after its failures in Indochina and Angola—the Iranian revolution. The result was that both the Carter and Reagan Administrations became determined to restore the strategic importance of Europe, and resolved to strengthen the U.S. nuclear arsenal on the Continent. Washington has repeatedly claimed that America is now in a position of strategic "inferiority," but in reality it is rejection of the prospect of *parity* with the U.S.S.R. that motivates U.S. policies in the present period, as Stephen Cohen has shown in an article in *The New York Times.**

The United States refuses to accept that wide areas of the Third World are now escaping its grasp or that the U.S.S.R. has gained a new capacity for establishing a presence in them. American leaders tend to see only strategic points on a military map when they look at the Third World—as in the recent cases of Namibia and Angola—while their Soviet counterparts are more inclined to assess developments there in terms of underlying social and economic processes. Moreover, it is often easier for Third World countries to adopt elements of the Soviet path to industrialization than to emulate the American way of life, creating further fears in Washington. So far as the U.S.S.R. is concerned, revolutions in faraway regions like Central America or southern Africa—events which occur independently of Russian policies—tend to pose costly and inconvenient problems of assistance or support, but generally speaking, the Soviet leadership under Brezhnev has felt that it could not refuse aid when asked. Nicaragua is a recent example. The Reagan Administration presents such aid to the American public as evidence of Soviet aggression and responsibility for "terrorism."

The New Danger in Europe

At the same time, the United States seems to have become increasingly concerned at the possibility that détente might open the door for further growth of Western European-Soviet relations and perhaps an eventual detachment of Western European defense from the American global military posture. The tendency toward parity of the Soviet ICBM and submarine systems with their U.S. counterparts could potentially emancipate Western Europe from its hostage role in any general nuclear exchange. By the mid-1970s it had become conceivable that a nuclear war could break out between the United States and the Soviet Union that might leave Western Europe more or less intact. Such a contingency might, in particular, occur if the conflict originated somewhere else in the world, where Western European interests were not involved. This possible reversal of previous cold-war scenarios—in which Europe was most vulnerable—opened a new space in European politics for disengagement from the arms race. The possibility of European reluctance to join in a nuclear war has been a source of great anxiety to American military planners, and explains the urgency of a new arrangement for U.S. forces in Europe. Thus, under the euphemistic label of "modernization," the United States is trying to induce the NATO countries to accept a deployment of nuclear missiles that would be free from the old "double-key system" (i.e., nominal joint control) and, for the first time, would give America overriding authority to unleash the latest generation of rockets against the Warsaw Pact nations. Naturally, the United States has sought to disguise this with promises of consultation, but in fact only the U.S. Army will possess

* "For the United States, the parity principle involves one essential question: Can we acknowledge to ourselves that the Soviet Union, whether we like its political system or not, has become a legitimate great power with comparable global interests—that the Soviet Union has attained political parity with us in world affairs? Plainly, we, unlike most nations, have not yet learned to live with that geopolitical, historical fact. Enthralled by 64 years of anti-Sovietism and by our long history of being the only superpower, many of our leaders and substantial segments of public opinion persist in seeing the Soviet Union mainly as "godless," "terroristic," and an "evil force" without any legitimate political status or entitlement in the world. We do not even discuss the parity principle openly. It remains, like sex in Victorian England, a forbidden, repugnant subject. But it is this unwillingness to concede political parity that repeatedly causes our diplomacy to succumb to militaristic policies, our acceptance of the necessity of military parity to succumb to the chimera of superiority, and episodes of détente to succumb to cold war." Stephen F. Cohen, *The New York Times*, June 26, 1981.

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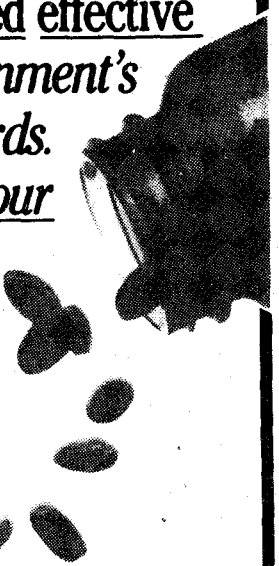

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authority to fire the new nuclear weapons from NATO territory. If in an earlier period the United States attempted to protect Western Europe with an American nuclear umbrella, now, under the new plan, Western Europe would be protecting the United States.

We do not find it surprising, therefore, that Moscow views the so-called "modernization" of NATO with an alarm reminiscent of Washington's twenty years ago when Khrushchev installed medium-range missiles in Cuba. We have no means of knowing exactly what the calculations of the Soviet leadership have been in the latest period; this is a field, as we have said, where Soviet citizens are kept in virtually total ignorance by their government.* But it is a safe surmise that there are two major reasons for the acute concern the U.S.S.R. has shown at the plan to install cruise and Pershing 2 missiles in Western Europe. The first must be seen in the context of U.S.-Soviet military relations as a whole since World War II. Historically, the U.S.S.R. has never been able to pioneer a single new weapons technology since 1945 (its brief satellite advance of 1957-58 remained nonmilitary and was rapidly overtaken by the United States; today the Soviet Union no longer even tries to compete in planetary exploration). At every stage, America has been ahead, taking the technological lead and obliging the Soviet Union to try to catch up. This permanent dynamic has structured Russian responses deeply, creating a pervasive inferiority complex that has probably prevailed over rational calculations in the 1970s.

SALT I was signed at a time when the United States had approximately 6,500 warheads, the U.S.S.R. some 2,200. There were thus more than enough Soviet weapons to destroy the United States by the early 1970s. Why then, it may be asked, was production continued, till today the Soviet Union has some 6,000 warheads? A number of factors were probably at work here. One was no doubt the sheer discrepancy in absolute numbers—the United States did not volunteer to reduce its stockpile to Soviet levels, so there was a temptation to follow upward to American levels. This could be rationalized by the contingency of war in other parts of the world besides the United States. Much more important, however, was the constant Russian fear of the American lead in weapons technology. Just at this time, Washington was introducing MIRVs into its strategic delivery systems, giving it a pronounced new advantage in the arms race.

The SS-20s which the Soviet Union is now deploying represent part of the belated Russian response to America's MIRVing of its warheads a decade ago—a decision in Moscow whose results started to come off the production line only in the late 1970s, but which dates back to the time of SALT I. The SS-20s are presented to the Russian public simply as new models of the old rockets, with no more strategic significance than a new fighter or tank replacing an old one. In reality, the Soviet propensity for very long production runs of weapons they have mastered (tanks, old-fashioned ICBMs, the new theater missiles), to a point of quantitative redundancy, is a kind of compensation for the failure to keep up with new weapons, evidence of a defense economy that has been persistently unsuccessful in generating innovations. By contrast, the cruise missile represents for the Soviet leadership a *qualitative* jump in the arms race, because it embodies a totally new technology that is far in advance of anything the U.S.S.R. could hope to emulate in the short run. Termed the "winged rocket" in Russian, its accuracy and ability to avoid radar detection are seen as deeply menacing initiatives by the United States. The cruise missile reawakens all the fears and feelings of technological inferiority of the past—hence the pitch of Soviet reaction to it.

There is, however, a second reason for the gathering diplomatic crisis that NATO modernization has created. This is the fact that the new generation of missiles will be an integral part of the American military machine and could be used without the consent of the European allies. If France, Italy or Britain had developed their own new missiles and retained full control over their use, the U.S.S.R. would not be nearly so nervous. Nobody in the Soviet Union can imagine that either France or Britain would have reason to start a nuclear war. But a pre-emptive strike by the United States is a much more imaginable and frightening scenario to the Soviet leadership; hence it sees the new "single-key" command structure implicit in the deployment of cruise and Pershing 2 missiles as a very dangerous lowering of the nuclear threshold. From the Russian point of view, the installation of the new generation of Soviet medium-range missiles—the SS-20s, which are the formal pretext for NATO's own projected modernization—cannot be compared

* It is symptomatic that the technical provisions of the SALT treaties were never published in the general press in the Soviet Union. There are some signs, however, that this policy may be changing, as official anxiety over the present crisis rises.

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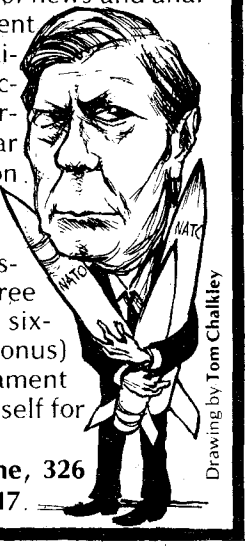

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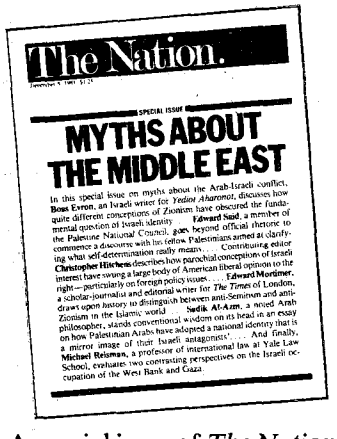
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with the escalation of the arms race that cruise and Pershing 2 missiles, targeted on the U.S.S.R., represent. For the SS-20s cannot reach the United States and do not, therefore, constitute an upset of the balance of strategic power equivalent to the new NATO system.

The Threat of 'Limited' Nuclear War

In official Western discussions about the new generation of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, one can discern a profoundly troubling change of attitude. If in the past nuclear weapons were considered almost entirely as deterrents, now there are suggestions about the practicality of so-called "theater nuclear weapons" and certain *rules* of nuclear warfare. This discussion of "limited" or "flexible" nuclear war has only occurred within NATO. The official Soviet attitude remains the old-fashioned belief that nuclear war is unthinkable, criminal and unwinnable. At the same time it is noticeable that American discussions about limited nuclear war have been mostly focused on Europe. American military experts apparently believe that it might be possible to confine a nuclear exchange to the mutual destruction of Western and Eastern Europe. While hundreds of new missiles will be installed near major European metropolitan centers, where military and civilian targets are indistinguishable, the United States decentralizes its own domestic missile systems to sparsely inhabited regions. As popular insecurity and apprehension grows in Western Europe, the Reagan Administration assures the American electorate of the prospect of renewed U.S. supremacy.

In the Soviet Union, by contrast, there are no illusions about the rationality of nuclear war. Despite periodic claims by NATO spokesmen, there is no planning in the U.S.S.R. for mass survival in a nuclear conflict; shelters are nonexistent in the new Moscow housing districts, while civil defense training in the provinces is confined to perfunctory bus trips into the forests. Likewise, no serious official statement has ever envisaged the U.S.S.R. winning such a war. In fact, the Soviet population is told that global nuclear war is lunacy and that no one would survive it. As far as "theater" war goes, it is not discussed and its possibility is officially denied. The U.S.S.R. in this sense does not entertain contingency plans for a limited nuclear war in Europe as does the United States. On the other hand, should any country launch or permit an isolated nuclear strike against the Soviet Union, then in all probability the U.S.S.R. would make a comparably limited retaliation against the territory of the aggressor. But the Soviet leadership has gone to great lengths to warn the Americans repeatedly that such hypothetically contained exchanges would not only be impossible to guarantee but are just the kind of delusion that could speed the way to a global holocaust.

The Western media frequently dwell on the political and economic advantages of the "free world" and the necessity to defend the democracy it represents. Democracy, however, scarcely exists as far as modern military machines are concerned. In both camps all really major decisions are secret, and neither parliaments nor publics have any serious influence on the formation of military strategy. It is true, and important, that in the democracies of the capitalist world, the population is freer to express itself and to organize peace movements or antinuclear campaigns. Periodic elections and Congressional and parliamentary debates are a reality in the United States and Britain. Nevertheless, even with a "free press" and "free elections," the public had no say in such decisions as the escalation of the Vietnam War, the invasion of Cambodia, the British purchase of the Trident missile or the production of the neutron bomb. Life-and-death decisions for humanity, involving billions or even trillions of dollars, entirely elude the supervision of general democratic processes. The new cold war and the accelerated arms race will only amplify these antidemocratic tendencies. Military systems exist as virtual states within states in the West; no one can really be certain where nuclear weapons are under "responsible" control. Thus the argument that the Soviet Union is more likely to employ nuclear weapons because it is not a democratic power is absolutely false. In both systems, capitalist and Communist, the general population is excluded from the relevant decision-making processes.

The Deadly Side Effects

Furthermore, once we consider the specter of nuclear proliferation in Third World countries, the behavior of the West must induce far more alarm than Soviet or Chinese policies. The dangerous and irresponsible spread of the technology of nuclear war in the "hot spots" of the world is, in fact, the most frightening development of the last decade. This has happened entirely because of the availability of *Western* nuclear technology and raw materials. Neither Israel nor South Africa could have developed their present nuclear capabilities without external assistance, primarily from the United States and France. The testing of a nuclear device by India in 1974 was possible only because of Canadian-supplied uranium and nuclear engineering skills. The controversy about a possible nuclear-military program in Iraq has to do with technology sold by the French and the Italians, while the so-called "Moslem Bomb" suspected of being under construction in Pakistan will also be based mainly on French technology. The Brazilian nuclear plant, meanwhile, has been supplied by West Germany. Thus potential or actual producers of atomic bombs in the Third World now indifferently include democracies like Israel and India, dictatorships like Pakistan, Iraq and Brazil, and racist or even "outlaw" states like South Africa and Taiwan. The Soviet Union, in stark contrast, has always refused to share its nuclear secrets even with its closest allies; it is a well-known fact that Khrushchev's denial of bomb-making technology to China was a major precipitant of the Sino-Soviet conflict.

The problem of proliferation is also obviously connected to the role of private profits and the international arms trade in the Western military-industrial complexes. In the West, issues of national security are highly commercialized and linked to the overall contradictions of capital accumulation. In many respects the production of new types of strategic weapons—including nuclear bombs and missiles—is based on the same economic determinants that regulate the production of new cars, television sets or washing machines. The incentives of the market place, combined with inherited technological superiorities, give the free world one important, if dubious, advantage over the Soviet bloc: a permanent lead in the design and output of new kinds of nuclear weapons and armaments systems.

On the other hand, the side effects of the arms race are probably more damaging in the long run for the

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capitalist economies. There was a time when it was typical for some Soviet dissidents to think that the Western economic system was much more rational and efficient than the U.S.S.R.'s because it was regulated by competition rather than by ideological principles. If they had looked at the role of military spending in the West, however, they would have seen how false this view was. The $1.5 trillion that the Reagan Administration plans to devote to military purposes over the next decade will create new inflationary pressures within the U.S. economy and, far from balancing the budget, will lead to enormous deficits. The diversion of astronomical quantities of social resources to build the MX and other new nuclear systems will slow investment in other sectors of the economy and weaken the United States still further in the face of the competitive pressure of the Japanese in high-technology consumer-goods industries. As not only money but also the talents of its best engineers and scientists are concentrated in efforts to create more sophisticated means of mass murder, it will be harder for the United States to maintain its economic leadership in the West or its celebrated standard of living. Needless to say, these negative consequences of military spending apply with redoubled force to a much weaker economy like that of Britain, as it prepares to take on the burden of paying for U.S.-made Trident missiles. The only Western economies to escape damage will be those that continue to stave off American pressure to increase military expenditures (the current economic power of both Japan and West Germany is clearly related to their low levels of arms spending). In the long run, the side effects of the arms race might destroy the capitalist system without war, as mass unemployment, inflation and reduction of foreign aid to poor countries give socialist ideology greater influence abroad than thousands of new nuclear missiles or neutron bombs can do.

What is the situation in this respect in the U.S.S.R.? Soviet defense spending, contrary to widespread belief, is not generally perceived as a major cause of their economic difficulties by the Russian people. The ordinary Soviet citizen blames the omnipresent bureaucracy for shortages, inefficiency and poor quality products, not the army. Partly this is because of the low visibility of the military establishment, much of which is camouflaged in ostensibly "civilian" ministries and budgetary programs. Partly it is because the Russian masses are aware of major improvements in the standard of living over the past decades, even without any reduction in arms expenditures. The 85 percent of the Soviet gross national product spent on nonmilitary purposes looms far larger in the public eye than the 15 percent allocated to arms; that this is twice the proportion of the G.N.P. that the United States spends on defense is of little concern to the average Russian. Above all, Soviet arms production is maintained at a planned, regular pace over long periods, whereas U.S. military spending is cyclical, with intervals of sharp downturn and mass unemployment. Thus the military sector of the Soviet economy is not associated with dislocation of employment or investment; it creates neither regional joblessness in downswings nor inflationary pressures in upswings. In this sense defense spending—although it is actually a heavier burden on a poorer economy—is also more compatible with price and planning stability. The result is to allow the Soviet government to maintain and legitimate a proportionately higher level of military investment than the West without the same range of disruptive side effects.

The Responsibility of the Peace Movement

The origins of the new cold-war atmosphere in world affairs are complex, and we have not tried to discuss all of them here. It is clear, for example, that all the new nuclear weapons systems now being prepared for the modernization of the Western armory—the neutron bomb, the cruise and Pershing 2 missiles, the Trident program, the "Stealth" bomber—were being designed some ten to twelve years ago, long before the coming of the new cold war. Whatever the diplomatic conjuncture, implementation of these programs was bound to create an acute political confrontation. Similarly, the deep economic recession of the capitalist world was likely to generate strains in the United States' global posture, regardless of other circumstances. Moreover, it has coincided with a series of popular revolutions in the Third World hostile to Western interests—in Ethiopia, Angola, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Iran and elsewhere. Long-standing regional conflicts in the Middle

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East and southern Africa have worsened, and the Western powers have proved impotent to resolve them. Meanwhile, Soviet interference in Afghanistan and the increase of Soviet influence in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia have exacerbated tensions in Asia. The surprising ineptitude of the Carter and Reagan Administrations in Washington, and of the Thatcher government in London, in attempting to increase pressure on the U.S.S.R. by playing the "China card" have further accelerated the deterioration in the international situation. All of these factors have contributed to the condensation of the new cold-war climate.

Fortunately, however, America does not have the international support in the new cold war that it enjoyed in the old. It seems unlikely that the United States will be able to recreate the same kind of anti-Communist consensus that it enjoyed in the NATO bloc during the Korean War period. Western Europe and Japan have come to share very different perceptions of the problems of the Third World from those of the United States. The Western European viewpoint has generally become more objective, paying less heed to the notions of "Soviet conspiracy" that still haunt paranoid visions in America. The existence of broad differences between Western Europe and the United States will, in fact, probably become of central importance to world politics in the near future. Already, many Western European countries like the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Greece and West Germany are trying to avoid participation in the East-West confrontation and are fighting to preserve the rudiments of détente by playing the role of moderators. Popular opinion in the Scandinavian countries is leaning to the creation of a regional nuclear-free zone, while center-left coalitions in Belgium and the Netherlands will probably refuse to accept the American gift of the new nuclear missiles.

The new cold war and the future spiral of the arms race cannot survive very long without active Western European participation, and we are optimistic that this participation will not be forthcoming. It is pertinent to compare the present logic of events with the previous buildups to world war. Both world wars developed out of internal contradictions and aggressive rivalries within European society, and both involved major military miscalculations (in 1914, the German expectation of a lightning success for the Schlieffen Plan; in 1941, the German misestimation of Soviet industrial power and tenacity). The new cold war is based on equally dangerous military miscalculations and geopolitical delusions, but this time Western Europe has no fundamental stake in the logic of confrontation. If, therefore, the United States continues its drift toward the reactionary right and supermilitarization, it seems probable that Western Europe will move correspondingly to the left and toward disengagement from confrontation. Should the United States refuse to take part in constructive arms negotiations with the U.S.S.R. this winter, the movement for unilateral nuclear disarmament in Europe will surely grow. There is no longer a single genuinely European problem that cannot be solved by nonmilitary means, and the call for cold-war mobilization has never sounded more irrational and atavistic. Millions of citizens of Western Europe are coming to realize that they have little to gain from entrusting their fate to the military establishment of a superpower that does not have either a competent government or a consistent and balanced international policy. The peace movements in Europe are already a powerful pressure for moderation: it is they who can halt the prospect of a dangerous new round in the arms race, threatening to all mankind.

Postscript. It is quite obvious that the November 18 major foreign-policy speech by President Reagan (his first), which was devoted entirely to the problem of medium-range nuclear forces in Europe, was precipitated by the growth of the European peace movement and its serious impact on the official policies of some European governments.

Reagan's speech was disappointing however, just because it was largely a superficial exercise in arithmetical propaganda. He tried to argue that the U.S. nuclear forces in Europe could be counted against the entire Soviet medium-range arsenal—and offered a highly inflated "zero option," which can hardly be taken seriously in the U.S.S.R. In this essay we deliberately tried to avoid discussions about the figures, because until recently the United States' nuclear arsenal was much larger than Russia's, a fact that has dominated U.S. policy. Until 1963-65, the Soviet Union had only medium-range nuclear forces as a reliable deterrent. During this period, the SS-4 and SS-5 missiles, which are now included in the zero option, were not considered important because the entire U.S. nuclear arsenal, located in Europe, in Asia and in the United States, was seen as the counterforce. If European countries take part in the discussions and decisions about the nuclear arms race as equal partners, the problems of Europe can be dealt with separately. When, however, the United States and the U.S.S.R. are the only negotiating partners, it is difficult to imagine that the Soviet leaders will agree to scrap all their medium-range missiles west and east of the Urals unless the United States reduces or scraps its huge new program of producing cruise and other missiles. It is unrealistic to expect that the U.S.S.R. will agree to include new SS-20s located in Siberia in the European disarmament talks.

We think that both sides may find discussion about disarmament more fruitful if they immediately stop the production of new weapons systems and then study the options available to reduce those that already exist. Reagan's zero option ignores the historical background of the arms race, and it tries to argue that the U.S.S.R. has been solely responsible for the escalation of nuclear weapons. That is wrong. We think that this zero option proposal was made with the deliberate aim of having it rejected, thus justifying the continuation of the new U.S. military buildup.

The Americans often see the nuclear arms race as something noble and missionary, as a bipolar struggle between good (American) and evil (Russian) forces, ignoring Europeans' own abilities to defend their lands. This statement by George Will in *The Washington Post* of November 22 is typical:

> The forces of an Asiatic despotism have been in central Europe for 36 years, deterred by inferior numbers of conventional U.S. forces backed by superior nuclear forces. Why are there people now in Europe's streets demanding unilateral disarmament? Because the balance of strategic and especially theater nuclear forces has shifted dramatically in Russia's favor, and deterrence seems less stable.

Will's views are characteristic of the general primitive attitude of the new American Administration toward the Soviet Union and greatly oversimplify the complex social and historical processes taking place outside the American continent. □

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KATHA POLLITT

THE COLLECTED POEMS. *By Sylvia Plath. Edited by Ted Hughes. Harper & Row. 351 pp. $17.50.*

Literary evaluations of Sylvia Plath have a way of turning into sermons, in which critics forsake close reading in favor of moral pronouncements on whatever issues strike them as pertinent to her case. Is life worth living? Most critics think it is. Is madness admirable? Most agree it is not. Are men the enemy? A chorus of cheers from feminists. Can one justifiably connect one's small, private, middle-class life with fascism, war and the Holocaust? Yes, claims A. Alvarez, for whom Plath is the ultimate literary risk-taker. No, argues Irving Howe, who is not only outraged by Plath's appropriation of the death camps to her personal situation but does not understand what, exactly, she was so upset about, anyway. The very fact that Plath was a woman has dazed many a strong mind. For Stephen Spender she is "a priestess cultivating her hysteria"; for Robert Lowell she is "hardly a person at all, or a woman," but Dido, Phaedra, Medea. George Steiner sees her poems as propelled by "the need of a superbly intelligent, highly literate young woman to cry out about her especial being, about the tyrannies of blood and gland, of nervous spasm and sweating skin, the rankness of sex and childbirth in which a woman is still compelled to be wholly of her organic condition." And you thought men sweated too.

What lies behind these responses is Plath's suicide—she killed herself, as all the world knows, in the winter of 1963 after her husband, the British poet Ted Hughes, left her for another woman. She was not, as many feminists like to think, unknown at the time of her death. Hughes's reputation was more established, true, but Plath had won her share of grants and prizes, had been widely published in magazines and had received favorable, although not very insightful, reviews for her first book of poems, *The Colossus*, which came out in 1960. It was the posthumous publication of *Ariel* in 1965, though, that made her fame—the wrong kind of fame, for it was based on the notion that her poems could be read as if they were a suicide note that "explained" her death. The possibility that her poems made a literary shape of their own has only recently been considered.

Probably nothing could have prevented the sensationalizing of Plath's work. Her voice, once she found it, was too strong, too strange, not to have struck a note of challenge, her life too brief and intense not to have been packaged as that of yet another doomed female genius. It must be said, though, that the way in which her work was presented to the public did little to bring about a better understanding of it. There was the chronologically jumbled release of her poems in the two post-*Ariel* volumes, *Winter Trees* and *Crossing the Water* (both 1971). There was the publication of still more poems in tiny limited editions and the failure to publish others at all. Most important, though, was the fact that *Ariel* itself, as printed, was not the manuscript of that name completed by Plath three months before her death but a selection put together by her executors in an order of their choosing.

The published book contained poems written after Plath's manuscript had been completed, an addition for which we must be grateful. But it omitted poems Plath herself had chosen for the book: "Mystic," "Purdah," "Brasilia," "The Jailer" and others. This editorial decision meant that late poems of great distinction were out of circulation while Plath's literary place was being debated; those that did belatedly appear, in *Winter Trees*, were mingled with poems Plath had put aside, and were discounted along with them.

Worse, the published *Ariel* destroyed the artistic pattern of Plath's manuscript. The *Ariel* we know ends on a note of absolute despair, and virtually invites the reader to luxuriate in the *frisson* of knowing that a week after writing "Edge" ("The woman is perfected./Her dead/Body wears the smile of accomplishment"), Plath would herself be dead. The actual manuscript ended quite differently, on the note of triumph sounded by the magnificent cycle of Bee Poems, whose subject is the reclaiming of an autonomous womanly self. Its final word, as Plath noted, was "spring." Would it have made a difference to her reputation, I wonder, if Plath's pattern had been preserved, with the last poems added as a separate section? Or even if a complete edition of her poems had appeared, say, ten years ago, when interest in Plath was still high?

Well, better late than never. Plath's image may be too firmly established by now for any information short of news that she is alive and living in Brazil to alter it, but those who care can at long last have her work entire, in a handsome edition chronologically arranged, introduced and annotated by Ted Hughes. It is a beautiful book, prepared with seriousness and love. Every poet should be so well served—although I do think most would prefer to forgo the hefty appendix of high school and college verse included here.

Complete collections often have an unintended effect: instead of displaying a poet's accomplishment, they subtly diminish it. Swamped by their pale, sluggish brothers and sisters, the special poems seem less and less unusual. We put the book away with the thought that the poet was, after all, quite right to have left half his work in the drawer.

That is not what happens here. One reason is that Plath was a superb craftsman who never, Hughes tells us, abandoned a poem until it had "exhausted her ingenuity." She wrote recalcitrant poems and failed poems, but none that were idle or blathering or tentative. With very few exceptions, every poem has a shape of its own. Another reason is that she was dazzlingly inventive. Even poems that fail to come off frequently contain lines of extraordinary loveliness. "Ouija" may bog down in Stevensish rhetoric, but it opens with eerie splendor: "It is a chilly god, a god of shades,/Rises to the glass from his black fathoms." The dreadful "Leaving Early," a savage account of a visit to an elderly woman who has somehow incurred the poet's hatred, offers the startling image of the poet "bored as a leopard" in her hostess's fuggy living room.

But the most important source of the pleasure to be found in these pages is

Katha Pollitt's first collection of poems, Antarctic Traveller, *will be published this month by Knopf.*

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the fact that Plath's was one of those rare poetic careers—Keats's was another—that moved consistently and with gathering rapidity and assurance to an ever greater daring and individuality. She was always becoming more distinctly herself, and by the time she came to write her last seventy or eighty poems, there was no other voice like hers on earth. Her end may have been tragic, her character not what we would choose in our friends, but her work records a triumph. Chronologically arranged, her 224 adult poems make a kind of diary of artistic self-discovery that is exhilarating to contemplate.

It was not an easy process. *The Collected Poems* shows just how hard Plath worked to transform herself from a subdued, well-mannered student of Auden, Eliot, Ransom and Lowell into the effortlessly associative poet of the late work. Discards vastly outnumber "book poems" in the entries for 1956-59, the years Plath was working on *The Colossus*, and it's hard to disagree with her verdicts. For all their skill, the rejects strike me as devitalized, strangled by the very technical proficiency that was later to be so liberating:

> Loam-humps, he says, moles shunt
> up from delved worm-haunt;
> blue fur, moles have; hefting chalk-
> hulled flint
> he with rock splits open
> knobbed quartz; flayed colors ripen
> rich, brown, sudden in sunglint.
> ("Ode for Ted")

The Colossus is a book of considerable interest quite apart from the fact that it was written by the author of *Ariel*. "Black Rook in Rainy Weather," "The Disquieting Muses," "Full Fathom Five," "All the Dead Dears" and many others have a controlled, melancholy beauty and a redeeming wit. Yet all but a handful—the musical, dreamlike "Lorelei," the playful "Mushrooms" and "The Thin People"—have about them a quality of having been willed into existence, of having fought for breath against an anxiety or depression that threatened to engulf them:

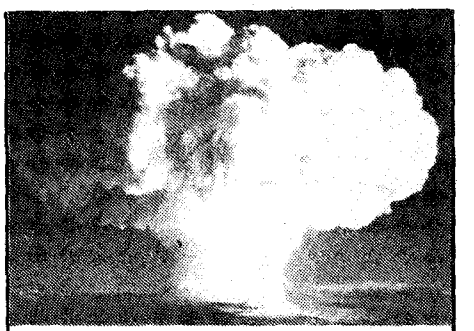
> Leaning over, I encounter one
> Blue and improbable person
>
> Framed in a basketwork of cat-tails.
> O she is gracious and austere,
> Seated beneath the toneless water!
> It is not I, it is not I.
>
> No animal spoils on her green doorstep.
> And we shall never enter there
> Where the durable ones keep house.
>
> The stream that hustles us
> Neither nourishes nor heals.
> ("The Burnt-out Spa")

"A fury of frustration," she wrote after completing the elegant pastoral "Watercolor of Grantchester Meadows." "Some inhibition keeping me from writing what I really feel."

It is certainly cause for wonder that this same poet should a mere three years later be turning out poems like "Daddy," "Lady Lazarus" and "Elm" with the speed, in Hughes's phrase, of urgent letters. Nonetheless, critics who deny a continuity between the early and late Plaths—usually to dismiss one in favor of the other—will want to rethink their positions in light of the wealth of evidence provided here for a broadly continuous development. As the chronological arrangement makes clear, Plath found and lost her voice many times. "The Stones," the first poem that hints at the new manner, was followed by a raft of poems in the old. The old bobs up long after the new has established itself: the Lowellian exercise "The Babysitters" postdates "The Rival" and "Tulips."

On the deeper level of themes and images, there was not so much a rift as a reformulation. Throughout her career, Plath worked with a tightly connected cluster of concerns—metamorphosis, rebirth, the self as threatened by death, the otherness of the natural world, fertility and sterility—and applied them all to what she saw as the central situation of her life, the death of her worshipped father when she was 9 years old and the complex emotions of loss, guilt and resentment it aroused in her even as an adult. But where the early Plath is autobiographical, Freudian ("Electra on Azalea Path," "The Colossus"), the later Plath is working in another mode entirely—of fixed symbols, drama and myth.

Jon Rosenblatt has argued that the late poems are governed by a vision of "negative vitalism," a conviction that all life is at the mercy of a cosmic, merciless principle of death, of which the dead father—along with God, male-dominated marriage, fascism, war and mass society—is only an aspect. Judith Kroll, who has traced the profound influence on Plath of Robert Graves's *The White Goddess*, makes a similar point, and shows how Plath cast her life in the form of a ritual drama of death and rebirth which the poems enact. "Tulips," "Ariel," "Daddy" and "A



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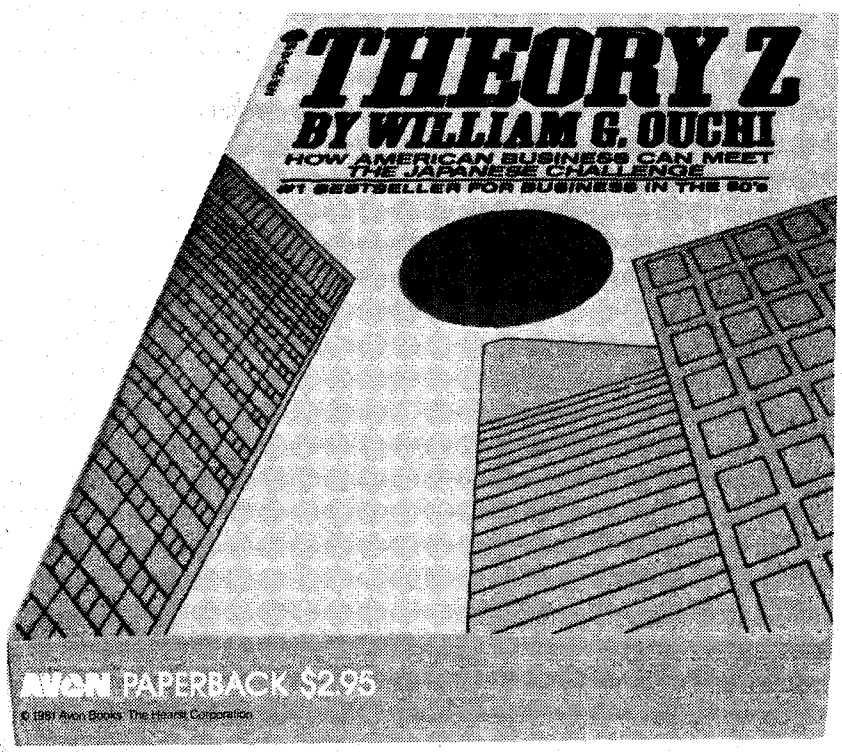
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Birthday Present" are thus not confessional poems in which the poet displays her wounds but dramatic monologues in which the speaker moves from a state of psychological bondage to freedom, from spiritual death to life, with suicide, paradoxically, standing as a metaphor for this transformation. In the late poems, Plath enters the world of death—the hospital room in "Tulips," the death train in "Getting There," the fever-induced fantasy of Hades in "Fever 103°"—suffers a ritual death and emerges reborn. This explains why Plath described Lady Lazarus, who is a kind of professional suicide ("One year in every ten I manage it"), as having "the great and terrible gift of being reborn. . . . She is the Phoenix, the libertarian spirit, what you will":

> Herr God, Herr Lucifer
> Beware
> Beware
>
> Out of the ash
> I rise with my red hair
> and I eat men like air.
> ("Lady Lazarus")

The impact of "Ariel" has been so great that other late poems, as well as the "transitional" ones of the early 1960s, have been overshadowed. One of the accomplishments of *The Collected Poems* will be, I hope, to remind us of the strength of much of this work. Any poet less rapidly evolving than Plath would have been tempted to rest on such laurels as "I am Vertical," "Wuthering Heights" and "Parliament Hill Fields." It is a great thing, too, to see late poems like "Stopped Dead," "Purdah" and "The Jailer" placed, finally, at the culmination of Plath's career, where they belong.

All these poems, but especially the late ones, fill out and qualify our sense of Plath's vision. To give but one instance: The critics who see her work as a rejection of life, and the feminists, too, will have to come to terms with the tenderness and purity of Plath's maternal feelings, as displayed in "Brasilia," "Child," "For a Fatherless Son" and her radio verse play *Three Women*.

If Sylvia Plath were alive now, she would be 49 years old—younger than Adrienne Rich, John Ashbery, Philip Levine and W. S. Merwin, younger, incredibly, than Allen Ginsberg. It is often said that when she died, she had gone as far as poetry could take her, and indeed, the very last poems do seem to leave no way out. I cannot believe,

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hough, that a poet as fertile and nergetic and fearless as Plath here hows herself to be could ever have been educed to silence by her own imagination. Had she lived, like Lady Lazarus he would surely have transformed herself yet again, as she had done before. "The loss to poetry has been inestimable," wrote A. Alvarez after her death. Surveying the current state of poetry, one can see how sadly right he was. □

Cold War Biblicals

NORA SAYRE

Propelled by the fear of godless Communism, coupled with the impulse to equate faith with success, rooted in the traditional American belief that national or individual prosperity was a sign of God's approval, the religious revival of the early 1950s escalated Bible sales, while Bishop Fulton J. Sheen and the Rev. Billy Graham and the Rev. Norman Vincent Peale basked on the best-seller list. While Richard Cardinal Cushing welcomed Joseph McCarthy to prayer breakfasts, politicians hastened to polish the credentials of Christianity, and the Republican National Committee identified Dwight Eisenhower as "the spiritual leader of our times"—even though he had rarely attended church in forty years, a practice that he remedied when he became a Presidential candidate.

Bishop Sheen's television series, *Life Is Worth Living*, reached 20 million viewers after it commenced in 1951; his political as well as his moral views were heard on 123 radio stations. In the 1930s, he had supported Franco in the Spanish Civil War, reasoning that "we cannot breed rats in abundance without being obliged to use rat poison, and so neither can we breed Communists without being obliged to use the poison of fascism." In the 1950s, he denounced the "colossal wastage of taxes to pay professors who would destroy America by teaching Russian Bolshevism," and he was prominent in converting ex-Communist informers to Catholicism. In the meantime, for middle America, patriotism allied itself with Christianity, while confidence (in the God-given right of Americans to enjoy what they spent or consumed) and anxiety (about nuclear warfare, a landscape riddled with Communist spies) swept many citizens into the churches, whose attendance had dwindled right after World War II was won. As multitudes ingested piety like a tranquilizer, contributions to religious organizations swelled.

Christianity as a commodity—as a wellspring of happiness, as a bulwark against the Red tide—was a boon for Hollywood: Bible epics provided an opportunity to inject action movies with the new religiosity, and to legitimize sexuality on the screen. Even before World War I, titillating scenes had been permissible on the stage as long as they occurred in biblical pageants; later, Cecil B. De Mille had exploited the same formula for silent movies. It was easier to lower a woman's neckline or slit her skirts in an evangelical context than any other, and sinners could cavort at length when Jehovah was sure to punish them. In fact, biblical movies simply had to illustrate lasciviousness—so that it could be condemned. Some of the actors who play pagans were obviously cast for their pectorals, and there's often a multiplicity of male nipples, which are even more conspicuous than the women's cleavage—many embraces are exchanged by the semi-nude. And when it's said that heathens ate "the bread of wickedness" and that they were "filled with vile affections," overhead shots of writhing bodies could evoke an orgy with more cunning than a close-up.

At the heart of the cold war, some producers were quite willing to indicate a kinship between Roman and Egyptian despots and the Kremlin. De Mille, who felt that there was "a Red band encircling the earth" and that criticism of his *Samson and Delilah* sprang exclusively from Communist sources, accused most of those who disagreed with him of political deviancy; in 1950, he led a campaign to require all members of the Screen Directors Guild to sign loyalty oaths, and he threatened to quote the remarks of his opponents to McCarthy.

Nora Sayre is the author of Sixties Going on Seventies *(Arbor House). This essay is an excerpt from her forthcoming book,* Running Time: Films of the Cold War, *to be published by Dial in April.*

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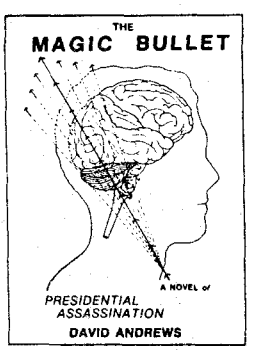

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He also proposed that directors should file reports with the guild concerning the politics of everyone who had worked on their last films—so that their colleagues could consult a "loyalty index" when actors or writers applied for jobs. And De Mille's own foundation supplied "information" about suspected left-wingers to the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

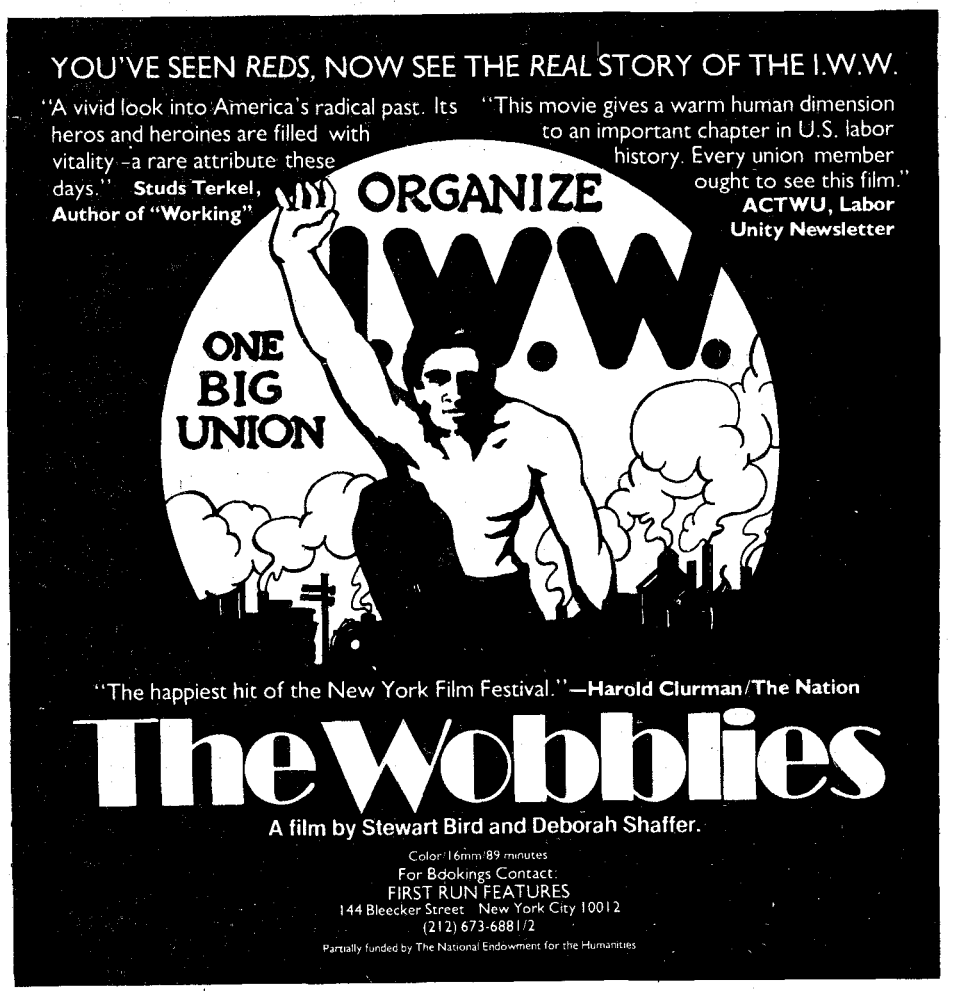
De Mille threaded his politics through his second production of *The Ten Commandments* (1956). In a prologue to the movie, he steps in front of a gold curtain to explain that "the theme of this picture is whether men are to be ruled by God's law—or whether they are to be ruled by the whims of a dictator. . . . Are men the property of the state? Or are they free souls under God? This same battle continues throughout the world today." When a slave in the film asks, "Is life in bondage better than death?" we catch a reverberation of "Better dead than Red." The opening narration of Mervyn LeRoy's *Quo Vadis* (1951) stresses that in Imperial Rome, "the individual is at the mercy of the state." The massive audiences that flocked to the Bible movies could not have missed the point.

Although the Roman palaces and the Egyptian temples were advertised as the products of scrupulous research, the language and appearance of the biblical personae were aggressively contemporary—presumably in an effort to make theology seem accessible, to reassure the public that religion could be entertaining, that history need not be scholarly or daunting. Sometimes the Romans or Hebrews speak like popular songs: "Love such as mine can never die" and "The night's still young." In *Quo Vadis*, the courtiers keep urging one another to "relax," and Robert Taylor tells Deborah Kerr that the Christian philosophers "shouldn't be stuffing your luscious little head with such nonsense." In *The Ten Commandments*, Anne Baxter strikes pin-up poses before her mirror and teases Charlton Heston when "the wine of desire is in her veins": "Oh Moses, Moses, you stubborn, splendid, adorable fool." (De Mille wrote in his memoirs that when he addressed writers and actors, he had "to translate the Bible's glorious and hallowed English into the crudest vernacular. It shocks but it makes real.")

The revealing costumes of Egyptia royalty resemble twentieth-centur lounge wear, and almost everyon clanks and jingles; the courtiers' jewelr and the slaves' chains tinkle relentlessl with each dramatic gesture. From fram to frame, the movies are as easy t follow as comic books; their infantil nature is highlighted by the fact that th wardrobes and faces and insights– "After all, dying is a part of liv ing"—aren't unfamiliar.

Graham Greene was once asked to re vise part of a script for a remake of *Be Hur*. Producer Sam Zimbalist told him "You see, we find a sort of anti-clima after the Crucifixion." But there ar few such letdowns in the Bible spec taculars of the 1950s, where the actio rarely sags: infinite chases—often i catacombs—and duels on staircases toppling temples, feasts, luxuriant bat tles and athletic murders maintain thei status as adventure films. Christians ar given to continuous calisthenics; devo tion makes acrobats of them all. Th crowds of Hebrews massing for the Ex odus in *The Ten Commandments* ar reminiscent of a vast roundup in a Western. (In the 1923 version, the Egyptian soldiers were played by California cowboys, and several hundred Orthodox Jews were hired because De Mille felt "they would give the best possible performance as the Children of Israel.") De Mille was extraordinarily gifted at directing legions of extras, and when he sent them marching and singing through the divided waters of the Red Sea, even an atheist was likely to be impressed. Of course, the Bible pictures needed mobs and stampedes and exotic vistas in order to fill up the wide screen in Hollywood's attempt to compete with television; the studio executives hoped that giantism would win back their waning audiences. But although the epics had a titanic success, CinemaScope and VistaVision and Superscope couldn't dent the public's enthusiasm for the small screen.

At the beginning of each film, we know that the most attractive people will become Christians: faces like Richard Burton's or Jean Simmons's were selected to see the light, and no incipient Christian could be unalluring. (Bigness demanded even more facial perfection for close-ups than the normal screen did; when the lips are twelve feet across, the gargantuan visages that weep or grin or glower can afford few blemishes.) Transcendent smiles overwhelm all the handsome features,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though no one glows quite so forcibly
; Victor Mature, who is illumined like
giant jack-o'-lantern. All the epics
onfirm that Christianity makes people
ery happy: they feel wonderful as soon
; they've embraced the faith. Clouds—
; a backdrop for joyful believers—are
opious in these films. While the Bible
iovies acknowledge that Christians
uffered for their sanctity—indeed,
heir tribulations justified lavish scenes
f violence, complete with burning
ties and satanic tortures—they're
sually rewarded long before the last
eels drench them with delight.

Miracles did not abound in the biblials until the 1960s, when marvels were lentiful in such movies as Nicholas ay's *King of Kings* and George tevens's *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. ome film makers found cinematic niracles distasteful; they thought that novies should not play on superstition. n the New Testament films, Christ is ardly ever shown, and never in a fronal shot; when he makes an occasional uest appearance, we see only his hands r his back. But, despite the inhibitions f other producers, De Mille didn't hrink from miracle-making. In *The Ten Commandments*, the Nile runs red, ail falls from a clear sky, blood trickles rom pagan statues, plagues proliferate, laming comets drill God's laws into the ocks of Mount Sinai and the burning ush is a microwave extravaganza. Since most of these wonders are menacing or punitive, one is reminded of the science fiction movies of the 1950s: the same apparatus of special effects is used to uplift or alarm. In the realm of the supernatural, the repressed hopes that Christianity can tap were answered by devices that awakened the hidden fears stimulated by the onslaughts of extraterrestrials.

Although a few movie miracles are benign—as when Ben Hur's relatives are cured of leprosy—most are intended to intimidate the witnesses. But the unearthly visitations could hardly have unnerved the audience: the voice of De Mille's God sounds like a warped record when He orders Moses to "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet" in the accents of New York City; in the ensuing dialogue, it's clear that the deity has laryngitis. Moreover, He must be a hair stylist, since Moses returns from the mountain with a totally new coiffure—his wife gasps, "Moses, your hair"—and it's difficult to venerate a great big wig-maker up in the sky. Therefore, although these movies predated the widespread rumor that God was dead, they rather innocently suggested that He was stale—a certain mustiness pervaded His domain, in spite of all the beards and frescoes and armor and torchlit parades that Hollywood assembled to magnify His glory. □

The Cosmopolite

HANS KONING

DISTANT RELATIONS. *By Carlos Fuentes. Translated by Margaret Sayers Peden. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 200 pp. $11.95.*

There is a definite authority about Carlos Fuentes as a writer, and whenever a book of his has failed to take me along on its convoluted path, I have felt I was failing the book rather than the book me. I am not quite certain where this authority comes from. Partly, I feel, it stems from Fuentes's aloof, even authoritarian, way of considering the human scene: he discusses our behavior as a conscious member of what used to be called good society. And partly the latitude we grant him originates in the hesitancy, even diffidence, with which we in this country approach and judge literature from the Third World.

Thus there is an obvious contradiction here. Indeed, Fuentes as a man about town and a man about the world, Mexico's former ambassador to France, is anything but a Third World citizen. The Third World label has meaning for his novels because he *chose* to write as the representative of a partly annihilated civilization; he *chose* to write for the vanquished more than the victors. But the contradiction seeped into his books. As he recorded those "tortured cries" from Latin America's history, he often came across more as a (highly lyrical) sociologist or anthropologist than as one of the victimized. From his first book, *Where the Air Is Clear*, to his magnum opus, *Terra Nostra*, Fuentes has wanted us to believe, with him, that his every thought and word carry within them the despair of the Indian, and reflect the cruelty of the Spaniard. Yet, to me, he has always seemed simply too self-assured to be a convincing witness for the damned of the earth.

In *Distant Relations* (*Una Familia Lejana*), his latest novel, the contradiction of Fuentes's work remains, but it has been muted. The tortured cries have been polished into the murmur of polite voices. A French count and a sympathetic listener converse in a private Paris club which overlooks the Place de la Concorde. Such old-fashioned decorum is maintained that no waiter dares disturb them as the room empties and darkness falls while they continue talking.

The subject of this very long colloquy is the elderly Count Branly's adventure as host to a visiting Mexican archeologist, Hugo Heredia, and his son Victor. The Heredias (the name is meant to carry the obvious connotations) play a game of looking up namesakes in telephone directories. This leads them from Paris to a country house inhabited by a French Victor Heredia and his son André. These French Heredias are of Latin American descent, and the French Victor is a vulgar upstart. The confrontation between the two families, and more acutely that between the old count and the French Victor, lead to a tumble into and through time and place, an ingenious and nonrealistic instance of the interweaving of Old and New World history that has come to occupy Fuentes's writing. Generations shrink or expand; forgotten ancestors become

Hans Koning's latest novel, The Kleber Flight, *was published last autumn by Atheneum.*

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living friends or enemies; a park in Paris changes place with a Caribbean jungle. The count's story and the novel itself reach their end when the sympathetic listener turns out to be Carlos Fuentes.

As a novelist, Fuentes is a great craftsman, and doubtless has his reasons for everything he does; the unpleasant shock the reader experiences when the novel's luncheon guest identifies himself as the author must have been part of his plan. That assumed, it is still hard to sympathize with it. For the appearance of the author has none of the rationale of those ancient devices employed when a writer found it necessary to explain how he heard a story or where he found certain documents; here it is too heavy for the threads that have been spun. There is no intuitive acceptance.

The same holds true, to this reader at least, for those many jumps in time and place in *Distant Relations*, those many paragraphs where we are left in doubt as to who is acting, who is acted upon. My lack of acceptance is not rooted in any conservative theories about the novel. I can accept virtually anything a writer may try, as long as I somehow feel he or she has reasons beyond the desire for cleverness, beyond the effort to *épater les bourgeois*, or rather *les lecteurs*. There were times when I lacked that certainty in *Where the Air Is Clear*; I lack it almost constantly in *Distant Relations*.

It is no digression to ponder at this point the veritable cascades of images with which many Latin American writers overwhelm us. In Gabriel García Márquez's celebrated *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, as in Alejo Carpentier's *War of Time*, we are aware of an energy, an abundance boiling over, which in those stories makes the cascades natural and necessary. In *Distant Relations*, that awareness is lacking. Do Cuernavaca's wild *barrancas* (the word is left untranslated as if to add to the riddle) really contain so many images and mysteries for the narrator, are they really so much more than just gullies or ravines covered with brambles? And how, for instance, does an image from a Hitchcock movie, of all things, fit into these visionary descriptions (of a cockfight in this case) which, we are told, are weighed down with the memory of the race, the feudalism of the conquistador, the humiliations of the Aztec? Does a "disagreeable man" standing in a large, whitewashed room genuinely remind the narrator of the "whited sepulchers" to which Christ compared the Pharisees? (Surely those sepulchers were whited on the *outside*, and such imagery is thought up at the writing desk?)

Che Guevara once characterized Fuentes as belonging to the *Izquierda atenuada*, the inconspicuous, attenuated left. That attenuation has proceeded apace; in *Distant Relations*, Victor Heredia tells the count that he belongs to a society (i.e., France) "that does not repudiate the virtues of its ancient executioners when they become victims. Your aristocracy has been shot, guillotined and exiled. But the political, aesthetic, and social culture of France has been zealously guarded. Thus someone like yourself can enjoy the benefits of a vanished order." Does this not mean that the political, esthetic and social culture of France was a creation of the aristocracy? (I think a good case can be made that it was created in spite of the aristocracy.)

I am certainly not suggesting that Fuentes's importance as a Mexican novelist will be diminished if we see him as having moved from his attenuated radicalism to a Place de la Concorde brand of conservatism. What *Distant Relations* does show me is this: without the modicum of political energy that Fuentes drew from his opposition to the specter of social injustice haunting Latin America, in the polished company of the private club, the exuberance of his images, and the games of freely exchanging time and place, may easily ring false. □

FILMS.

ROBERT HATCH

Reds

John Reed is remembered today, insofar as he is remembered at all, as the somewhat Byronic hero of American radicalism's age of innocence. The author of *Ten Days That Shook the World* was handsome and dashing, an eloquent speaker, a superb reporter and a daring activist. And he died young, a casualty in the war for social justice. As Henry Miller remarks in *Reds*, Reed thought he could bring to pass the universal brotherhood of man—a notion that had also occurred to Christ, and for which He was crucified. It may be said, then, that Reed was a revolutionary saint, and saints, it is notorious, are uncomfort able companions for the commonalty They are imprudent, intolerant and im patient; they are overbearing and can b cruel. We put saints on pedestals, tha being the safest way to cope with them

Warren Beatty—who directed *Red* from a script he wrote with Trevor Grif fiths, and who plays Reed in the film—is explicit about what it means to rut elbows with saintliness. *Reds*, like *Chariots of Fire* and *Ragtime*, is a big historical machine, but it is not, as are those others, brightened by the varnish of nostalgia. It spans the churning second decade of this century, from the vain struggle of the I.W.W. to gather the workers of America into one invincible union, to the triumph of Bolshevism in the maelstrom of Russia after World War I. It is the period when Greenwich Village became the symbol of our native bohemia, when Eugene O'Neill was writing his early one-acters in New York City and Provincetown, when Max Eastman edited *The Masses*, when Emma Goldman laughed at her jailers, when not one but two American Communist parties split off from the decorous Socialists and when Lenin found power lying in the streets.

In the center of this international turmoil, giving it dramatic shape and human scale, Beatty places the love, marriage and scarifying incompatibility of Jack Reed and Louise Bryant (Diane Keaton), the Portland, Oregon, dentist's wife and emancipated woman who mistrusted Reed's vision, hated the way he spent himself and followed him to the end of his desperate quest. The two aspects of this movie, the world stage and the personal romance, are almost grotesquely disproportionate, and it would have been fatally easy to let the private story dominate, producing a sentimental tale of love surviving the flames. Beatty makes clear the bruising relationship between Reed and Bryant, but he develops that side of the film always in the context of the social and political upheavals in which the lovers appear as both agents and pawns. From time to time, he and Keaton fill the screen with the vehemence of their characters' competing wills, but then almost immediately they are swept away again by the storm.

Reds is an emotionally taxing movie. Like any chronicle of noble aspiration (like Andrzej Wajda's *Man of Iron* in these weeks of Poland's crisis) it is heartlifting, but we view it with tragic

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hindsight. As Beatty interprets his career, Reed was a lion among the American radicals, whom he both inspired and not a little frightened. But the Russians neither admired nor feared him; they merely used him. Beatty has made a considerable study of the man and his times. He sees the idealism and the folly; he is excited by the boldness of the dream and saddened by the awakening to darkness. As a result, his performance exhibits a strong grasp of Reed's personality and a flexible accommodation to its range. Reed could reason and plan and brilliantly record; he could also rage and threaten. He was too uncompromising for any but the Bolsheviks, and they were relentless for purposes he failed to understand until he was on the point of death.

It is splendid acting, and Beatty gets similar work not only from Keaton but generally from the very large cast. I can mention here only a few of the players. Maureen Stapleton shows us Emma Goldman as an island of ironic sanity, a woman at ease with herself and strong enough to cut her losses. Since it is Stapleton who plays her, Goldman here is also possessed of an earthy bounce and humor. Jerzy Kosinski (author of *The Painted Bird*, among other novels, and making his debut as an actor) is stunning as Grigory Zinoviev, the Bolshevik leader. He is handsome and commanding, an eloquent spokesman for the revolution which he so effectively helped to strangle in its cradle. Jack Nicholson plays O'Neill, who is seen to have an affair with Bryant during one of Reed's many absences. As always, he is fun to watch and impossible not to watch, but O'Neill was a morose and drinking man, and Nicholson has played that character so often that he fell into the trap of giving us the type instead of the man. It's a pity, for the playwright is one of the important secondary figures in the film.

In addition to the main cast, Beatty has brought together a group of thirty-two "witnesses," men and women who knew Reed and Bryant and who recall the couple and their times. This chorus includes Roger Baldwin, Henry Miller, Adela Rogers St. Johns, Scott Nearing, Isaac Don Levine, Rebecca West, Will Durant, George Seldes and George Jessel—to list only the names that are most familiar. They break repeatedly into the narrative with personal anecdotes and contemporary views of what to us is history. It is a bold and effective device—an authentication of the past by the elders of the tribe. It is also astonishing. Reed died some sixty years ago; he must have then been in his mid-30s, and these people were roughly his contemporaries. As the names above suggest, the witnesses are a mixed group, but they have shared a tenacious hold on life (some of them, it is not surprising, have died since Beatty took their testimony).

Reds runs for three and a half hours, with a brief intermission. That is very long for any picture, and I think too long for this one. The love story will not quite span the time, the embraces and lacerations of the relationship becoming repetitious. And the big historical scenes—political assemblies, military engagements, mass demonstrations of exultation—tend to be more noisy than enlightening. Beatty has a surer hand with individuals than with crowds. A half-hour, probably more, could be cut with no damage, and it will be done, I predict, when *Reds* is brought to television. But Beatty, who produced, directed, helped to write and starred in this impressive work, may be forgiven for not having the heart to cut it. □

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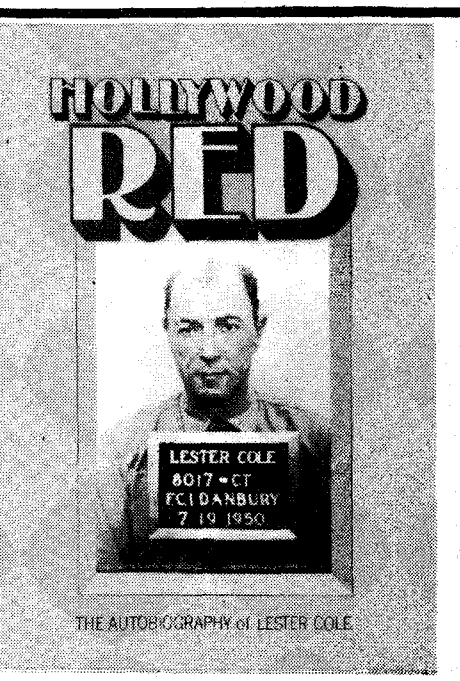

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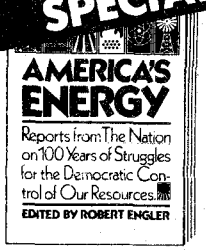
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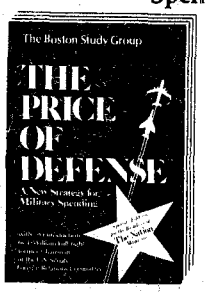

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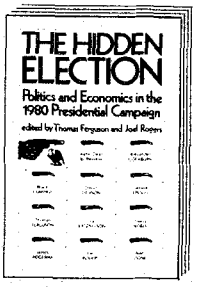
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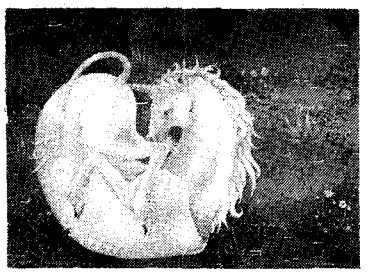

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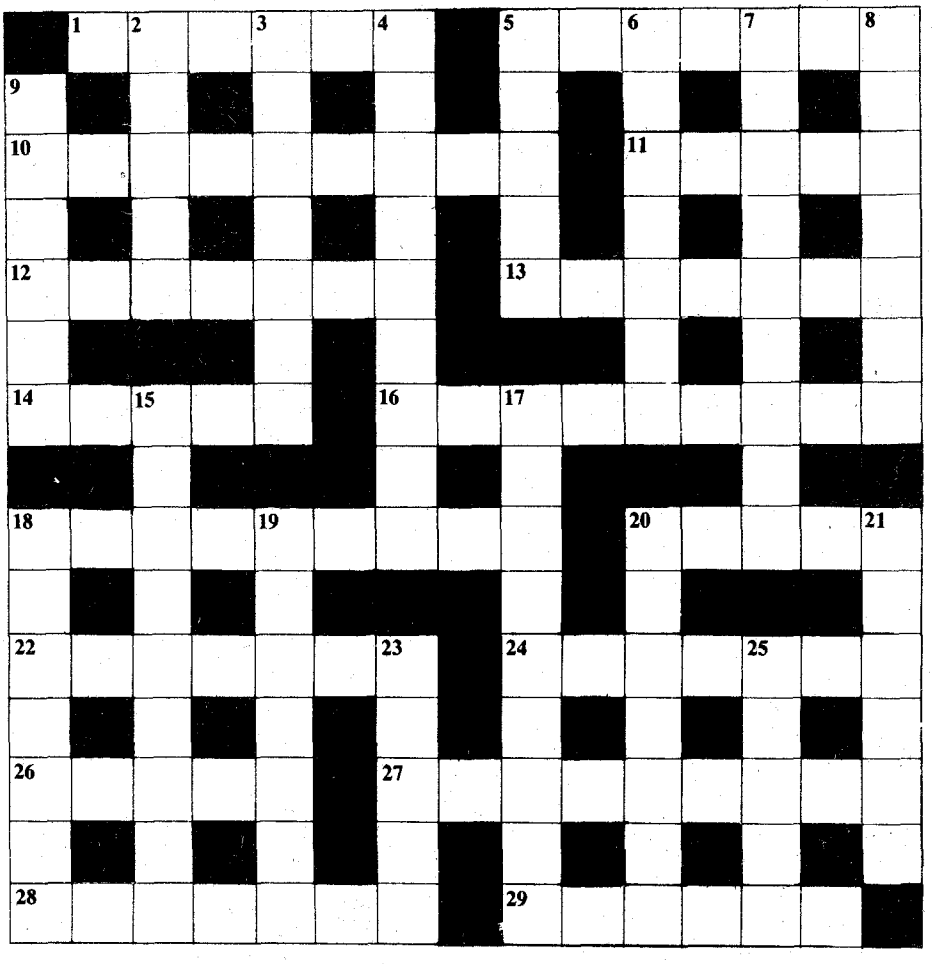

ACROSS

1 A painful disease one associated with an animal. (6)
5 An auto has a fuel mixture of rather prudent description. (7)
10 Looks to make sure the plug's pulled out? (That might show where your money goes!) (5,4)
11 An absence of affirmation in more than one recess? (5)
12 Given the double-0 in False Tudor setting—certainly not a proper interior. (7)
13 and 27 Play time associated with one possibly living in the same country as 1. (5,2,3,6)
14 One hopes it wouldn't be hard to take out of satin! (5)
16 Evidently charm doesn't generate that warm feeling at such a time. (4,5)
18 So the table is ready for the evening meal—particularly the dishes. (6,3)
20 What might be associated with Columbus, very lacking in what some dancers look for. (5)
22 If 5 down were pointlessly put to it, this might mean fine furniture for such as NBC. (7)
24 Confused with Little Lord Tennyson inside? One might be easily confused! (4-3)
26 And while Tennyson had one, it might be typified by 13-27. (5)
27 See 13
28 Incorrectly said to go on little streets when they're especially mean. (7)
29 Here's a poser: If game is so, aren't you supposed to shoot? (6)

DOWN

2 Miss Garbo's make-up was obviously very good. (5)
3 Part of the junk now needlessly collected might be typified by "X." (7)
4 Behaves reciprocally with wrecked trains, etc. (9)
5 To which Casey Jones mounted. (5)
6 Fails to follow—take no notice with such renegades! (7)
7 First Nero fiddled—with the outer limits, perhaps. (9)
8 Lulu's sort has a little foot lifted inside. (Long? Intensely so!) (7)
9 Those who bled with Wallace take nothing to heart—as the barely motorized traveler sometimes does. (6)
15 Is a man not a tedious one in part— as many books are? (9)
17 For openers, they lack "S"—being somewhat confused. (9)
18 Needs to change marks, plainly! (7)
19 Is a hitch likely to follow their get-away? (7)
20 Suggests a way to extinguish extreme pleasure. (7)
21 Possibly on the wrong side, otherwise in Paris Mr. Whitman seems to come up with it. (6)
23 Tossed by RLS's wind. (5)
25 Strike vigorously something bigger than yourself? (5)

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